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No New Thing.

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDSHIP.



It is now close upon three thousand years since an old king in Jerusalem sat down in some weariness and bitterness of spirit to record his conviction that nothing new was discoverable by human wisdom: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." A later and less famous philosopher has added to this that there is nothing true, together with the comfortable conclusion that "it don't signify." To such extreme lengths not many of us will be prepared to go; but it will be agreed on all hands that our common mortal nature remains much the same to-day as it was in King

Solomon's time. Now, as then, gardens and orchards, men-singers and women-singers, gold and silver, and all the delights of the sons of men can bestow nothing but satiety; now, as then, the experience of all the past generations is of very little service to the passing one; now, as then, the wise man's eyes are in his head, while the fool walketh in

darkness, and one event happeneth to them all ; very much the same vices and virtues flourish, and meet with very much the same degree of recognition. And so, when a small novelist of the nineteenth century takes up his pen to describe, within the limits of his small capacity, that infinitesimal section of humanity which has come under his own observation, no one, surely—except a very unreasonable person—will expect his work to be novel in anything save the name.

The following story, then, will professedly contain nothing new. The personages who are to figure in it will be, without exception, unremarkable personages. There will be good and bad folks among them ; but none of these will be very good or very bad, and the events of their several and joint lives will not be half so startling as many that may be read of in the newspapers every day.

It is to be hoped, however, that readers will not allow themselves to be discouraged by the candour of this preliminary confession, but will plod cheerfully on ; and who knows but that, before they reach the last words of the last chapter, they may light upon something that will be at any rate new to them ?—seeing that they will not be all of them Solomons. For, although there be nothing new in the planet which we inhabit, it by no means follows that phenomena calculated to fill us with the most profound astonishment are not daily occurring upon its surface. Are we not invariably astonished by some proof that our fellow-creatures are made of the same clay as ourselves ? Does not ingratitude, for instance, shock to the full as much as it angers us, especially when we suffer personally in consequence of it ? When we are brought face to face with selfishness, baseness, infidelity, are we not usually as much surprised at the sorry spectacle as if such failings had never been heard of before, and as if we ourselves were wholly exempt from them ? Does any man understand how his neighbour can be so utterly stupid as to fall a victim to self-deception ?

All these qualities, and their opposites, will appear incidentally in the course of the ensuing pages ; so that the fault will lie with the writer, not with the subject, if no interest is felt in the persons treated of ; the first of whom shall, without further waste of words, be introduced upon the scene as he hurries along the platform of the Charing Cross station on a bright summer's morning.

"Guard," says he, "I want a smoking-carriage."

"Very good, sir."

"And—here you are, guard."

"Thank you, sir."

"Just lock the door, will you, till we're off? I don't want anybody else in here."

"I'll do the best I can, sir," says the functionary, making use of the time-honoured formula of his genus ; and apparently his efforts to earn five shillings in defiance of the Company's regulations are crowned with the success which honest labour merits, for presently the train

glides out of the station with but one occupant of the carriage in question.

The passenger who had displayed so great a love of privacy as to require an entire smoking-compartment for his own use lit a cigar, sighed heavily once or twice, and dropped into a brown study, which, judging by the frown on his brow and the worried expression of his face, must have had some intricate and perplexing matter for its starting-point. He was a tall, thin man, whom some people might have called fine-looking, but whom no one, probably, would have considered handsome. He had a pair of pleasant brown eyes, a nose which was decidedly too large for beauty, and his mouth was concealed by a long moustache, which he twisted and tugged in the course of his meditations. He had in no way the appearance of a young man, although his age at this time could hardly have exceeded three-and-thirty. Some men, as the casual observer has doubtless noticed, preserve the ways and the air of youth up to the confines of middle age; while others—and these are perhaps the majority—pass through a transition period which is neither the one thing nor the other. Our solitary passenger was of the latter class. The casual observer would scarcely have found anything sufficiently striking about him to excite curious speculations as to his identity; but no observer, however casual, could have felt one instant's doubt as to what was his calling in life. He was a soldier from the crown of his closely-cropped head to the tips of his well-blacked boots; and observers with an eye for detail might even have formed a tolerably confident guess at the branch of the service to which he belonged. Had he been an officer of infantry he would not have had a clearly-defined diagonal line across his forehead, separating a corner of white skin from a larger expanse of red brown; a hussar or a lancer would have been more fashionably, and a plunger more loudly, dressed. There remain the two scientific corps; and some trifling points about this gentleman, such as his attitude, as he sat slightly sideways, his right leg tucked under the seat and his left stretched out stiffly before him, seemed to harmonise with the addresses upon a packet of letters which he presently drew from his pocket—"Captain Kenyon, R.H.A., Aldershot."

He had read his letters before, for the envelopes were all torn open; but possibly he may have desired to refresh his memory by reading them again. He ran through the first two or three briskly enough; they had a legal aspect, and evidently related to matters of business. But over the last he lingered for a long time, often referring back to words already perused, breaking off every now and again to gaze abstractedly out of the window, smiling faintly sometimes, yet sighing even while he smiled, and maintaining always the puzzled and anxious expression of one who has got into a situation of which the full significance is not yet clear to him. This letter was written in a woman's firm, flowing hand, upon paper with a broad black border, and ran as follows:—

"LONGBOURNE: 18th August.

"MY DEAR HUGH,

"I ought to have written before this to thank you for the kind letter which you sent me four months ago; but I am sure that I need not really apologise, and that you will know that I did not value your sympathy the less because I could not acknowledge it just at once. If I could have written to anybody, it would have been to you. Now I am quite able to write, and to talk to you too; and you need not have any scruple about discussing the business matters which you say we must go into, because I want to hear about them, and to know what my duties are, and where I am to begin, and all the rest.

"And I do very much long to see you. The others mean to be kind, but they don't understand; and of course they cannot, never having had to suffer in quite the same way that I do. It is only you who have the secret of putting yourself in everybody's place, and knowing things that you have never been told, and could not have been told. Do you remember how poor old nurse used to say, 'There's not a man or woman in Crayminster as can hold a candle to 'Ugh'? And then the person whom she was addressing would simper, and look down with an air of modest deprecation, till she explained, 'Bless your soul, I don't mean *you*! I mean 'Ugh Kenyon.' I reminded them of it yesterday, when we were talking of your coming down; and I think they were a little shocked at my laughing. They think I ought not to be able to laugh, and at the same time they talk of the necessity of my 'rousing myself,' and are in a terrible fright lest I should 'shut myself up and mope.' My father reminds me that I have many duties and responsibilities to face, and a career of great usefulness open to me; and Mr. Langley warns me to beware of the temptation of a selfish sorrow, and is convinced that I should be better in mind and body if I went to confession. I don't think I will go to confession; but of course I should like to be of use to others, if I can, and I do wish and intend to put my wretched self out of sight, and let my neighbours suppose that I have 'got over' my trouble, as everyone is expected to do after a time. But, oh! dear old Hugh, *you* know, if nobody else does, that that is quite an impossibility, and that neither four months, nor four years, nor any number of years can make the smallest difference. It won't be the same Margaret whom you used to chase round the Precincts when she was a child, and whom you used to dance with at the county balls when she was a gawky girl—it won't be that Margaret who will meet you to-morrow, but another person altogether, who has somehow got into her skin, and would give anything to be out of it. I died when Jack died: that was the end of my happiness and the end of my life. Only someone, who is I, and yet not I, has got to live many years longer in a world which is the old world, and yet is a totally new one; for, like auld Robin Gray's wife, 'I'm no like to dee.' And so it is all bewilderment and a puzzle; and I think, if anyone can give the clue to it, it will be you. You re-

member how I used to run to you in all my little troubles in the old days; you were always my best friend. And then you were Jack's best friend too. I have got a few things of his to give you—his gun, and a trout-rod, and some other things. I don't know whether they are good of their kind; but I thought you would like to have them, so I set them aside for you. It has been such a comfort to me that he made you his executor. Old Mr. Stanniforth has written to me; but he seemed to think you would tell me all that it was necessary for me to know—and I would very much rather have it so. I can't tell you what a relief it will be to me to be able to talk to someone just as I feel.

"I should never have ventured to inflict all this rambling egotism upon anyone but you, and perhaps, after now, I won't make even that exception; but I know you will forgive it for this once. I have a great deal to tell you and ask you about; but it will be better said than written.

"Ever your affectionate friend,

"MARGARET STANNIFORTH."

"A comfort to her that Jack made me his executor!" muttered Captain Kenyon, as he restored this letter to his pocket, after having perused it often enough to have learnt its contents by heart. "I hope it may be a comfort to her, poor thing! I hope so, I'm sure, with all my heart. It ain't much of a comfort to me, I know."

He sighed, re-lighted his cigar, which had gone out, and shifted his place from one side of the carriage to the other and then back again. "Not that I grudge the trouble, mind you," he added, apologetically addressing an imaginary hearer, "nor the—the—awkwardness of it; it isn't that. But——" He did not finish the sentence, but presently resumed, in a more decided and cheerful voice, "Well, Lord knows how it will all end! but for the present my duty is clear and simple enough; there's some consolation in that."

So he gave his broad shoulders a shake, as though mental burdens could be cast off after that easy fashion, and, turning to the window, looked out at the woods and hills and pastures of the pleasant county where he had been born and bred, and through which the train was now rushing. It was a year since he had last gazed at those familiar scenes and landmarks. Barely twelve months before he had travelled down from Aldershot, on just such a sunny summer's morning, to be present at a gay wedding in Crayminster Cathedral. It had been his pleasing duty to act as best man on that occasion, and the bridegroom had been his old friend Jack Stanniforth, and the bride his still older friend Margaret Winnington, the daughter of the Bishop. The ceremony had been a grand and largely attended one, and had created no small stir in the county, where Mrs. Winnington, whose eldest daughter had recently been led to the altar by no less a personage than Lord Travers, enjoyed that mixture of respect, envy, and detraction which commonly falls to

the lot of mothers who marry their daughters well. Jack Stanniforth, to be sure, was hardly so big a fish as Lord Travers, being not only unconnected with the aristocracy, but devoid, to all intents and purposes, of so much as an authentic grandfather. But then, as everybody remarked, Kate had been a beauty, whereas Margaret was really almost what you might call a plain girl, and the riches of the Stanniforths were understood to be boundless.

Big fish or little fish, Jack had, as a matter of fact, been landed by no skill on the part of his future mother-in-law, but simply by his own good will and pleasure. He had been brought down into those waters by Hugh Kenyon, who was thus responsible, if anyone was, for his subsequent capture; and it was therefore only right and proper that Hugh should have been present, in his best blue frock-coat and with a sprig of stephanotis in his buttonhole, to stand behind the bridegroom on the auspicious day.

Of old Mr. Stanniforth, the wealthy Manchester merchant, who dwelt in a palace near the city in which he had made his fortune, and who rarely stirred beyond his own park-gates, Crayminster knew nothing and London very little; but his two sons had the privilege of a large acquaintance in the metropolis and beyond it, and were as popular as rich, well-mannered, and modest men are sure to be. Tom, the elder, had for some time sat as one of the members for a large manufacturing borough; Jack, the younger, had entered a smart hussar regiment, and had disported himself therein, during the early years of his youth, to the satisfaction of himself and his brother-officers, and to the intense admiration of the opposite sex, until he had added to all his other charms the crowning one of inheriting unexpectedly a large fortune by the death of a maternal uncle. Upon this he had sent in his papers; and almost immediately afterwards, having happened to go down to Crayminster with his friend Kenyon, had seen Margaret, had fallen in love with her, and, after a very brief courtship, had proposed and been accepted.

Little as Captain Kenyon had foreseen such a result of his introduction of the ex-hussar to the Bishop's family, his share in bringing it about was not the less gratefully and magnanimously acknowledged by Mrs. Winington. "Dear Hugh," she had said, in her most benign manner, "I shall never forget, and I am sure Margaret will never forget, that her happiness has come to her through you." And this compliment should have been the more agreeable to its recipient, inasmuch as Mrs. Winington had not always been used to address him in so friendly a tone. Of course—as she would often explain to her intimates—she was devoted to dear old Hugh, and during the lifetime of his uncle the Dean, he had almost lived in the house, and had been quite like a son to herself and an elder brother to her daughters; but now that Kate and Margaret were growing up, one really had to be a little more careful; because people would talk, and there was no saying what

preposterous notions men might not get into their heads if proper precautions were not taken to nip such notions in the bud. There had, therefore, been occasions upon which a sense of duty had led Mrs. Winton to turn the cold shoulder to her dear old Hugh, and to point out to him with somewhat unnecessary emphasis how great was the disparity of years between him and the young ladies to whom he had been "quite like an elder brother." Now a glance at Hart's Army List would have disclosed the fact that Jack Stanniforth was only Captain Kenyon's junior by a year; but, as has been already remarked, some men are young up to the verge of middle age, while others have ceased to be so before they are out of the twenties; and Jack certainly belonged to the former and Hugh to the latter category. He had, indeed, been so long accustomed to hearing himself addressed as "old Hugh" that he had ended by accepting the adjective in its literal sense and acquiescing in its propriety; nor had he failed to join in the laughter which arose from all sides when the bridegroom, in returning thanks at the wedding-breakfast, had expressed a hope that his best man would soon follow his bright example. Old Hugh was so evidently a predestined old bachelor.

Immediately after the wedding the young couple had started for Switzerland and Italy upon a tour which was prolonged far beyond the limits of ordinary honeymoons, the excuse for their protracted absence being that their new home could not possibly be made ready to receive them in less than six months at earliest. This new home was that fine old place Longbourne, near Crayminster, for many generations the residence of the Brune family. It had come into the market some years previously, owing to the necessitous circumstances of the owner, and had found a purchaser in Mr. Stanniforth of Manchester. What could have been Mr. Stanniforth's object in acquiring an estate which he had scarcely seen and showed no disposition to occupy was a puzzle to everybody, until the construction of the Crayminster and Craybridge branch line, which cut through an angle of the property, with satisfactory results to the pocket of its new owner, seemed to throw some light upon the mystery. Now, the old gentleman, in an easy and princely fashion, had offered Longbourne as a wedding gift to his second son, stipulating only that he should be allowed to put the place in order before the bride and bridegroom took possession of it. They, for their part, were nothing loth to consent to an arrangement which promised them a somewhat longer holiday under southern skies; and so architects and artists, landscape-gardeners, stonemasons, and upholsterers, had come down from London in a small army, and had busied themselves throughout the winter in beautifying the house and grounds, which were destined never to be enjoyed by those for whose sake all this expense and trouble had been incurred. For, one afternoon, Jack Stanniforth, a strong man, who had scarcely known what illness was in the course of his merry life, rode back to Rome feeling tired and chilled after hunting

on the Campagna; and the next day he took to his bed; and before the week was out he was dead and buried.

Under the shock of this sudden and terrible calamity the young widow had fallen into a sort of stupor, which at first caused considerable alarm both to her friends and to her medical advisers. The latter had enjoined absolute rest, change of scene, a bracing atmosphere, and what not—since doctors, when they are called in, must needs enjoin something—and Mrs. Winnington had hastened out to Italy, and had taken her daughter, passive and indifferent, to the Engadine. After a time Margaret had rallied, had returned, by her own desire, to England, and had taken up her residence at Longbourne, where it now became necessary that Hugh Kenyon should seek her out, in order to explain to her the provisions of her husband's will, under which he and the dead man's father had been appointed executors and trustees.

Such was the condensed tragedy of which the details passed quickly through Captain Kenyon's mind, as he sat looking out of the railway-carriage window. And as he remembered it all, and how, only the other day, he had travelled over the same ground on his way down to the wedding, and how, but a few months before that, Margaret had not even seen the man who was to be her husband, he could not help saying to himself that it was impossible that so brief an episode—however terrible it might be—should cast a permanent gloom over a young life.

"It isn't the same thing," he mused, "it can't be the same thing, as losing a husband or a wife after twenty years of married life. That would be like having an arm or a leg cut off—there would be something gone from one which one could never forget nor replace. But this—well, this is more like having a tooth out; a wrench and a howl, and all's over." Then, repenting of having used so homely a metaphor, even in thought, he muttered sadly, "Poor Jack—poor old fellow!"

Presently the train drew up in Crayminster station, and a groom in mourning livery came to the door and touched his hat. The dog-cart was waiting outside, he said, and was there any luggage, please? No; Kenyon answered, there was no luggage; he was going back that same evening. He climbed into the dog-cart, but declined to take the reins. With an odd sort of pang and feeling of compunction, he had recognised the cart as one that Jack used to drive, and the horse as one of his friend's old hunters. As the vehicle clattered through the narrow streets of the old town, more than one pedestrian nodded and waved his hand to its occupant; but Hugh, who kept his eyes obstinately fixed upon his boots, saw none of these friendly signals. He knew that by no possibility could he traverse Crayminster on any day of the week without encountering at least a dozen acquaintances; and he was afraid of being stopped and questioned. Therefore he would not look up, and was relieved when he had left the town behind him and was well out into the open country.

Half an hour's drive, at first across broad water-meadows and then through woods and up a long gradual incline, brought him to the lodge gates of Longbourne—new gates and a new lodge, as Hugh observed. He had known the place well in the late Mr. Brune's time, and was prepared to find it altered, not altogether for the better, by the touch of the Manchester millionaire. It appeared, however, that Mr. Stanforth's taste, or the taste of those employed by him, had been better than Hugh had anticipated; for the alterations were not conspicuous, and such as there were were of a kind to which exception could not be taken. In the undulating park and in the long avenue of lime-trees which was the pride of Longbourne there was no room for change; only the gardens had been extended and improved; new lawns and terraces had been laid out, and brilliant masses and ribbons of colour replaced the scanty and ill-tended flower-beds of former years. The house itself, a red-brick structure, which, like most country-houses of its date, was said to have been built after designs of Inigo Jones, showed no traces of interference, except in so far as that its white stone facings had been renewed or cleaned; no plate-glass had superseded the many panes of the large oblong windows, nor was the long flat façade disfigured by any modern bows or bays.

But when once the hall-door was passed, Hugh found himself upon totally unknown ground. Under the Brune *régime* the furniture of the mansion had been meagre and its servants few; now there was perhaps rather a superabundance of both. The entrance-hall was embellished with antlers, with old carved-oak chests and cabinets, with huge vases of Oriental china and with arm-chairs in stamped leather. The drawing-room, into which Hugh was ushered, had been despoiled of its tarnished gilding, its brocade and three-pile Axminster; and in lieu of these departed glories was a more sober style of decoration; subdued colouring; a few paintings by old Dutch masters; chairs, sofas, and tables more valuable than resplendent. Everything was perfectly correct—a little too correct, Hugh thought; for at the time with which we are concerned correctness of upholstery had not yet become the chief aim and object of the British householder. The place looked a trifle cold and stiff and uninhabited; and over the whole establishment there brooded the solemn hush of wealth.

While Captain Kenyon was proceeding with his unspoken criticisms the door opened, and a tall, slim woman, dressed in widow's weeds, entered, and held out her hand to him, saying, "How do you do, Hugh?" in a low, quiet voice. Though he could hardly have been unprepared for the appearance of this lady, he started as violently as if he had seen a ghost, and, finding not a word to say, grasped her hand silently, while he looked into her face with an eager, questioning gaze.

The face that he scanned so anxiously was not beautiful, nor even pretty. For one thing, it was extremely pale, with that grey pallor which comes only from illness or suffering; and, as is often the case

with fair-complexioned women, the colourlessness was not confined to the cheeks, but seemed to have extended to the hair and eyes, the former of which ought to have been, but was not, golden, while the latter ought to have been, but were not, blue. An old-fashioned passport would probably have summed up the remaining features tersely with "forehead high, nose ordinary, mouth rather large." It was, however, an honest, trustworthy, and kind face—a face which all dogs and children, and some discriminating adults, understood and loved at the first glance. Margaret Stanniforth had never been accounted a beauty, yet she had never lacked admirers; and, when in the glow of youth and health, she might even have passed for a pretty girl, had she not happened to be the plain one of a family somewhat notorious for good looks. For the rest, she had a good figure; she carried her head well, as all the Winningtons do, and she had, as they all have, a certain undefinable grace and air of good breeding.

The sight of her in those deep mourning robes almost unmanned the soft-hearted Hugh; and, instead of one of the brisk little cheerful speeches which he had rehearsed on his way from the station, he blurted out something awkward and incoherent, at last, about never having thought he should meet her again like this; but she had the quiet ease of manner which belongs to unselfish people, and she gave him time to recover himself by talking about the proposed restoration of the cathedral, and her father's speech in the House of Lords, and other matters which could be treated of without danger of disturbance to anyone's equanimity.

"Are you all alone here?" Hugh asked at length.

"I am now. I had two of the boys with me until yesterday; but they have gone back to school." She added after a pause, "My mother is very kind, and would stay with me as long as I liked; but of course she is wanted at home; and, as I shall have to be a great deal by myself in future, I thought it was better to begin at once."

She spoke without a tremor in her voice, quite calmly and almost coldly; and Hugh was just the least bit in the world disappointed and chilled. Her speech was so very unlike her letter, he thought. But then the speech of most people is unlike their letters. Presently luncheon was announced, and he had to seat himself opposite Mrs. Stanniforth in a dining-room, or rather dining-hall, which would have accommodated fifty guests comfortably. He had hoped that a cover might have been laid for him beside her, for he had an uncomfortable feeling about occupying Jack's place; but the butler had probably omitted to take this delicate scruple into account. The repast was prolonged and very dreary. The table, though narrowed to its smallest dimensions, was still a long one; and Hugh and Margaret laboriously kept up conversation in a high key across it, conscious all the time of being furtively watched by a discreet butler and two stealthy giants in mourning livery. Hugh thought to himself that, if he were Margaret, and if he were compelled to eat his

meals every day with three respectful pairs of eyes fixed upon him, he should infallibly go out of his senses in less than a week.

Perhaps she guessed what was passing through his mind; for, as soon as they were alone, she said, laughing a little, "Those servants are a terrible ordeal to me. I found them here when I arrived: Mr. Stanniforth had supplied them, with the furniture and the carriages and all the rest. I am hoping that you will tell me I must dismiss at least two of them."

"Oh, I don't think there will be any need for that," answered Hugh.

"No? So much the worse for me, then. Shall we go back to the drawing-room now, and get our business talk over?"

Jack Stanniforth's will was a portentous document of the old-fashioned pattern, drawn up for him by his father's lawyers and signed by him on his wedding-day. The effect of it—there being no child born of the marriage—was that, subject to the usual restrictions, his widow took a life-interest in all his property, real and personal; which, together with her settlements, would give her an income of from fourteen to fifteen thousand a year. But it took Captain Kenyon some little time to state this simple fact. He was a man of an orderly and somewhat slowly-moving mind; and he thought it incumbent upon him to explain the will, clause by clause, going into many details which his hearer only half understood, and with which it is needless that the reader should be wearied.

"Fifteen thousand a year!" ejaculated Margaret, with a sigh, when he had at last reached his conclusion; "that sounds an enormous sum of money."

"Well, yes; it is a large sum. Not so large as it might have been, if we had not been so tied down as to investments; still——"

"Still, enough to live upon with strict economy," interrupted Margaret, with a slight laugh. "Hugh," she added suddenly, "do you know what I should like to do?"

"Yes; you would like to give away the whole of it to somebody without loss of time."

"Not exactly that; but I should like to give Longbourne away; or at least to restore it to its proper owner."

"To Mr. Stanniforth, do you mean?"

"No; to the Brunes. It really belongs to them, you know; we have no right to the place. Jack felt that very strongly, and he did not at all like the idea of coming to live here. He always used to say that Mr. Brune had been deprived of his property by an unfair bargain."

"Hardly that, I think. Of course it was a bit of bad luck for him. If he had held on a little longer, the railway would have put him pretty nearly straight, I suppose; but no one could have foreseen that at the time of the sale."

Margaret was silent. "At all events," she said presently, "I want to let him have his own back now, if it can be managed."

"But, my dear Margaret, it cannot possibly be managed."

"Why not?"

"For many good reasons; but one of them is final. The place is not yours to dispose of. I am afraid I must have explained matters very stupidly; but the fact is that you are only a tenant for life."

"It is I who was stupid; I ought to have listened more attentively. And what becomes of Longbourne after my death?"

"Well, then it goes, with the rest of the property, to Tom Stanniforth or his heirs."

"Tom Stanniforth will have more money than he will know what to do with," observed Margaret. "I am sure he would willingly surrender his chance of inheriting Longbourne."

"I am not much of a lawyer; but I almost doubt whether he could. In any case, Mr. Brune would not be very likely to accept a gift of an estate from a stranger; and he could not buy it back. I used to see the elder brother sometimes in years gone by: this one I hardly knew; but from what I have heard of him, I should think he was about the last man in the world to whom one could venture to propose such a thing."

Margaret rose, and walked to the window. "Ah, well," she said, "it was only an idea of mine; I scarcely expected to be able to carry it out. But, Hugh, I feel almost certain of one thing: I shall never be able to go on living here."

Hugh wrinkled up his forehead, and looked distressed. If he had felt free to speak out plainly the thought that was in his mind, he would have answered, "I'm sure you won't. Flesh and blood couldn't stand it." But women are so uncertain, and so prone to act upon impulse: and it is not always wise or kind to show all the sympathy that one may feel. Upon the whole, it seemed best to reply, "I wouldn't do anything in a hurry, if I were you."

Margaret went on, as if she had not heard him. "It isn't the solitude that I mind; I could be contented enough in a little cottage, with a cook and a housemaid to look after me; but I was never meant to rule over a large establishment. The small worries of it suffocate me. One would think that a great sorrow, like mine, ought to make one indifferent to small worries; but somehow or other it doesn't. You would be amused if you knew how frightened I am of the servants. There is an old housekeeper, a Mrs. Prosser, who was here under Mr. Brune, and who took care of the house all the time that it stood empty, after Mr. Stanniforth bought it. I am obliged to have an interview with her every morning, and she is very respectful and deferential; but of course she looks upon me as an interloper, and she has a way of standing with her hands clasped before her, turning one thumb slowly over the other and staring at me with her little black eyes, which makes me so nervous that I hardly know what I am saying to her."

"Give her the sack."

"I don't think I should ever dare. And there would be no excuse for sending her away either; for, as far as I can judge, she is an ad-

mirable housekeeper. Besides, the butler and the coachman are quite as bad in their way. Sometimes I have thought of entering a sisterhood. Would that be very wrong, do you think?"

"I don't think it would be wrong," answered Hugh slowly; "but——"

"Yes; I know there are a great many buts; too many for me to think, except in a vague sort of way, of doing such a thing as yet. I keep it as a last resource—in case I should find my life quite unbearable."

Captain Kenyon had risen, and was standing beside her at the window now.

"Oh, Hugh," she said suddenly, clasping her hands round his arm, "what am I to do? What am I to do with my life?"

"My dear," he answered, greatly moved and full of pity, yet quite unable to express what he felt, "how can I tell you? You must have patience. When things go wrong with us, there is nothing for it but patience."

After all, it is seldom by speech that a sense of sympathy and friendship is conveyed. Perhaps no eloquence could have given Margaret more comfort than these few words from a friend who was himself always patient, always brave, and whose life had been full of petty troubles, arising for the most part out of the lack of that which she found so heavy a burden.

"I will try," she said, straightening herself up. "Only it seems to me that it would be so much easier if I were not rich. Everybody keeps repeating to me that money is such a blessing, and that I ought to be so thankful for it; and yet what can it do for me? Nothing—absolutely nothing!"

"It is at least so far a blessing that it brings independence with it."

"But if one does not want to be independent? I am one of those weak people who are born to be subordinates and to be told their duty day by day. Is there *no* way in which I could rid myself of this enormous income?"

"I'm afraid not. You see, the will says—let me see; where is it? Oh, here—'Trusts.'" And Hugh began reading, in a hurried, mumbling voice—"To be received by her my said wife for her own use and benefit during her life or until she shall marry again or until she shall sell assign mortgage or charge or otherwise incumber the same or attempt so to do or shall do or suffer or become subject or liable to some act proceeding matter or thing whereby the same interest dividends and annual produce if payable to her absolutely for her life would become vested in or payable to some other person or persons Provided nevertheless and——"

"Oh, never mind," interrupted Margaret, with a half laugh. "I quite understand that there is no legal way out of the difficulty." And she wondered why a slight flush had mounted into Hugh's brown cheeks

while he had been reading, and why he looked so oddly, and was such a long time in folding up the big document again.

How could she tell that he had loved her almost from her childhood? How could she tell that her marriage to his friend had shattered all his hopes and day-dreams? How could she tell that that possibility of her re-marriage, contemplated as a mere formality by the will, was one that, despite poor Hugh's honest efforts to banish it from his mind, was forcing its way thither every day and every hour? These were secrets which Captain Kenyon had hitherto successfully kept, and was likely to continue to keep, to himself. If, in the depths of his heart, he had begun to look forward to some remote future time, at which Margaret, having read and re-read this dark page of her life, might find that the power was still in her to open a fresh one, and if he had heard with a certain inward exultation of her anxiety to be free from that wealth which must needs be hers so long as she bore the name of Stanniforth, he was sincerely ashamed of such thoughts, and did his best to stifle them. For he had been loved and trusted by the man who was dead; he was trusted, and in a manner also loved, by the dead man's widow; and to be guilty of an unspoken treachery to either of them was what he could not bear without self-reproach.

But if the tongue is an unruly member, the brain is a substance yet more unruly, and is wont to assert its independence after a specially vexatious fashion when it receives direct orders from the will. Therefore this conscientious executor and compassionate friend was ill at ease, and discharged himself of his double functions in an awkward, guilty and half-hearted manner. He fancied, at least, that he was doing so; as a fact, he could hardly have shown greater kindness to Margaret than by abstaining, as he did, from counsel or consolation, and by listening to her in silence while she told him of the incidents of her short wedded life and of the swift catastrophe which had closed it. She shed no tears; she had a low, pleasantly-modulated voice; she talked so calmly that it might almost have been the story of another woman's life that she was relating. Pacing by her side along the shady lawns, he heard her with a mixture of pleasure and pain and hopelessness. He knew—though she never said so—that he was the first person to whom she had spoken so openly since her husband's death; he knew that she was treating him with a confidence which she would not have reposed in her father or mother; but this knowledge made him neither more sanguine nor less remorseful.

"You will come and see me again soon, won't you?" she asked, when the time came for him to bid her good-bye. And he answered hurriedly, "Yes; as soon as I can—that is, as soon as you please. I can almost always get away for a day now; and you know you can't give me greater pleasure than by sending for me whenever you want me."

Nevertheless, as he drove away, he hoped that no very speedy summons from her would reach him. Such advice or assistance as it was in his

power to give her would be more easily and safely conveyed by letter than by word of mouth, he thought; and it even occurred to him once or twice to regret that he had not effected an exchange to India which had been upon the point of arrangement when the news of Jack Stanniforth's death and his own appointment as executor had caused him to abandon the project.

On the platform he encountered the Bishop of Crayminster, who was on his way to hold a series of confirmations in neighbouring towns, and who hurried up to him with trembling hands outstretched.

"Ah, my dear Kenyon, my dear friend, this is a sad meeting! You have been with our poor Margaret—poor dear!—poor dear! How little we anticipated this a year ago!"

The Bishop of Crayminster was a tall, thin old gentleman, with a weak, handsome face, blue eyes, and white hair. He spoke habitually in tremulous lachrymose accents, addressed all men as "my dear friend," was greatly beloved by the clergy of his diocese and commiserated by their wives, who asserted that Mrs. Winnington ruled him with a rod of iron.

"I should like much to have a few minutes' conversation with you," he said, casting an imploring glance at his chaplain, who discreetly got into a carriage lower down in the train, leaving Hugh to enter the empty compartment which had been reserved for the Bishop.

"And how did you find her?" asked the latter, when the train had begun to move. "Sadly altered, I fear: terribly shaken and bowed down?"

"Well, no," answered Hugh, "I can't say that she struck me as being exactly that. Of course she feels the loneliness of her position a good deal, and the—the weight of her wealth, you know."

"Ah yes, dear me, yes! Riches are indeed a doubtful blessing. But we must not repine. Poverty is perhaps a more severe trial."

"Perhaps it is."

"In some ways—in some ways. I don't know what she will do with herself, poor child."

"She spoke of entering a sisterhood," Hugh remarked.

The Bishop threw up his white hands in dismay. "A sisterhood! Oh, my dear friend, I trust you dissuaded her from taking so serious a step as that."

"Oh, I don't think she contemplated it very seriously. In time, I dare say, she will learn to stand alone; but it comes a little hard upon a woman just at first."

"It does—it does indeed. Her mother thinks—of course it is early days yet to speak of anything of the kind; but mothers will look forward—she thinks that dear Margaret may eventually marry again. Perhaps we ought to hope that it may be so. I doubt whether our dear Margaret's shoulders are broad enough to bear the cares of life unaided."

"If she does marry again, she will be delivered from the cares of a

large fortune," said Hugh bluntly. "Her interest in Stanniforth's estate terminates with her death or re-marriage."

"Eh?—really? I don't think Mrs. Winnington—I—er—I did not understand that. Is it not rather an—unusual arrangement?"

"I believe not at all."

"Ah, well; I am very ignorant of such matters—very ignorant. Can this be Craybridge already? Well, my dear friend, I must bid you goodbye. I trust we shall see you in these parts again before long. Dear Margaret, I know, leans very much upon your help and advice; and I am sure you will advise her wisely."

The Bishop had taken Hugh's big brown hand, and was patting it paternally. "We must trust to time and Providence," he said, "and not try overmuch to rule the destinies of others. For my own part, I am disposed to be of St. Paul's mind with regard to widows. They are happier if they so abide—happier if they so abide."

And with that, his lordship descended slowly to the platform, and shuffled away on his chaplain's arm.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. STANNIFORTH'S NEIGHBOURS.

THE venerable city of Crayminster stands in a vast hollow. From the neighbouring heights its gabled roofs may be seen huddled together in a compact phalanx round the cathedral towers, having changed little in aspect or area in the course of the last hundred years or so, and having only thrown out here and there an outpost in the shape of a detached suburban villa. The slow-flowing Cray intersects the town and winds down the long valley, through water-meadows where cattle crop the rich grass, and over which light mists usually hang in summer and cold fogs in winter. The valley of the Cray does not indeed bear a high character for salubrity, and the strangers who are attracted to Crayminster by the fame of its ancient cathedral seldom carry away with them a favourable impression of the surrounding district. For when, having duly admired the Lady-chapel, descended into the crypt, and climbed the tower, they escape from the hands of the verger into those of the flyman, the latter, whose generic instinct leads him to shirk up-hill work, commonly suggests to them a nice drive along one of the excellent turnpike roads which leave the town either by the eastern or western gate, and pass through mile after mile of flat, fertile, and monotonous country, where sleepy silence reigns, where there are but few habitations, and those of an unpretending and eminently unpicturesque order.

But if, instead of following these rather dreary thoroughfares, they were to strike off due north or due south, they would find themselves

almost immediately in a higher, healthier region—a region of low, rolling hills and leafy coverts, a region of hop-gardens and waving cornfields and frequent hamlets, diversified by glimpses of park lands and old timber—for properties do not run to any great size hereabouts, and the squirearchy rules in force—a region rich in pleasant mansions and substantial, prosperous-looking farmhouses.

Near the high-road, some two miles beyond Longbourne, is a long, low edifice, which can hardly be said to come under either of the above denominations. The paddocks which surround it could not, by any stretch of courtesy, be made to duty for a park; adjoining it are barns and ricks and a large strawyard, while the sunny slope of the hill behind it is occupied by a well-filled orchard in the place of terraces and shrubberies. These and other indications sufficiently show its tenant to be a farmer; but, on the other hand, the house itself has an air of comfort and refinement somewhat above the aspirations of an ordinary yeoman. This house, known as Broom Leas Court, had at the time with which we are concerned been for a good many years owned by Mr. Neville Brune, and inhabited by him and his numerous family. It would be difficult to give an accurate description of it. It had been constructed bit by bit as occasion had seemed to require, and as funds to pay the builder had been forthcoming, and was a complete architectural jumble. Here was a fragment of the original structure, with gables, overhanging upper story, latticed casements and black beams upon plaster of a yellowish-white tinge; there a modern bay, with French windows opening upon the lawn; every kind of building material seemed to have been employed, brick in one place, stone in another, stucco in a third; over all was a mantle of ivy, of swaying Virginia-creeper and clematis.

A great deal of money had been spent, first and last, upon the creation of this queer domicile, for Neville Brune had the family incapacity for doing anything cheaply, and the family dislike to being worried by small economical details. With the fortune which he had inherited from his father—a very respectable one for a younger son—he had purchased and stocked the Broom Leas farm; there he had dwelt ever since, and there, to all appearance, he was now likely to end his days.

A gentleman who adopts farming as a trade is, by common consent, only a step removed from the proverbial fool who chooses to be his own lawyer; and Neville Brune's friends and neighbours, who were acquainted with his hereditary failings, smiled and shook their heads when they heard after what fashion he proposed to make his living. A considerable time, however, elapsed, during which he lived, not extravagantly, yet with a certain careless profusion of expenditure, and if he did not make his fortune, neither did he figure in the *Gazette*. Then he married Miss Boulger, the daughter of a rich banker, and began those building operations which were long the delight of his life, and which were renewed intermittently, year after year, to meet the requirements of a rapidly increasing family. It was rumoured that Mr. Brune was getting into

difficulties, when his elder brother and his father-in-law died suddenly within a few days of one another. Either of these events might have been expected to convert him into a much richer man, but it so happened that neither of them did produce that desirable effect, for the old banker bequeathed to his daughter a thousand pounds, her mother's jewels, and nothing more; and Mr. Brune the elder, who had been a very eccentric and expensive personage, living much in foreign countries, and squandering money through every channel whereby money can be squandered, left his affairs in such inextricable confusion, and his estate so heavily encumbered, that Longbourne seemed likely to prove a white elephant to the heir. It was always Neville Brune's way to make up his mind quickly, after holding counsel with himself and with nobody else. He saw clearly that neither he nor his son would ever be able to live at Longbourne. To let it would be a mere protracting of misery and putting off of the evil day; moreover, he wanted ready money badly. He therefore determined to offer the place for sale, and it was immediately snapped up by Mr. Stanniforth.

No sooner had this decisive act been accomplished than there arose up to heaven such a weeping and wailing from the numerous collateral Bruness, to whom Longbourne had ever been as the Palladium to the Trojans, that the luckless head of the family was like to have been deafened by the din of it. Uncle John and Uncle James, Aunt Harriet and Aunt Elizabeth, not to mention a host of cousins far and near, all wrote to say that they could find no words adequate to express their horror of the sacrilege which had been committed. Sooner would they have starved, sooner would they have united their own small means and purchased the estate between them, than that it should have passed into the hands of a stranger. And, great as had been the wrath of these worthy people at the outset, it was naturally increased tenfold when that windfall of the Crayminster and Craybridge railway went to swell the already overflowing money bags of the infamous Stanniforth. Then it was that the insane—the indecent precipitancy of Neville's conduct cried aloud for denunciation. Then it was that Aunt Elizabeth, in an eloquent and breathless letter, drew a parallel between her nephew and Esau, and predicted that his ill-gotten gains would prosper no better than those of Ananias. Nor, unhappily, was it only by reproaches from without that the delinquent was made to feel the heinousness of his guilt. Mrs. Brune, who had once been pretty and fond of society, who had always detested a rural life, and had consoled herself through long years of monotony with an undefined expectation of one day escaping from it, considered that she had a strong case against destiny. Being blessed with high principles and a fine sense of duty, she could not breathe a word reflecting upon the memory of her father, and for the same unexceptionable reasons she refrained from bringing railing accusations against her husband; but neither principle nor duty forbade her to sigh over the loss of Longbourne, and accordingly her life became, so to speak, one

protracted sigh. She had long wanted a grievance, and now that she had got one, she did not stint herself in the indulgence of it. Never a day passed without some reference being made by her to the fallen fortunes of the Brunes. Her children were taught to regard themselves as despoiled and the Stanniforths as their despoilers; and her husband, who would fain have allowed the whole matter to pass into the category of those misfortunes which, being irreparable, are best not talked about, was soon driven to recognise the impracticability of such a course. Mrs. Brune was a weak, plaintive, and disappointed woman, much given to religious exercises and to breakfasting in bed. Her health was bad, and so perhaps was her temper; but as the latter defect did not manifest itself in any of the recognised fashions, she passed pretty generally for a martyr, and was as much commiserated as she was respected by the entire parish.

From all this it will be seen that the world had not gone altogether well with Neville Brune, but he was not one of those who cry out when they are hurt, nor had any one ever heard him complain of his luck. Acquaintance with disappointment had not soured his strong and sweet nature, but had bred in him a disposition to make the best of things, an increased enjoyment of the woods and fields, and a kindly humour which was not always understood by those of his own household. It had not been without a sharp struggle that he had brought himself to part with the old home where he had been born, and where the happiest years of his life had been spent; but of this he had said nothing. Only—unlike Mrs. Brune, who, through the long period during which Longbourne had remained untenanted, had loved to wander among its silent paths and gardens like a Peri at the gates of Paradise—he had never once set foot upon the property since it had ceased to be his. At the time when this story opens he was a small, spare, wiry man of forty or thereabouts, dark complexioned and a trifle stern of aspect, as his father had been before him, but by no means stern of character. He had a trick of looking straight into the face of any person whom he might be addressing, which sometimes gave offence, and which was certainly rather embarrassing, for his grey eyes were as keen as a hawk's; but, in truth, he meant no offence by this practice. At people whom he disliked—there were not many such—he avoided looking at all.

One day, shortly after that on which Hugh Kenyon had paid his first visit to Longbourne, Mr. Brune came in late for luncheon. This was a most unusual event, for at Broom-Leas punctuality was a duty rigidly inculcated and practised, and a number of small heads were turned inquisitively towards the master of the house as he took his seat at the end of the long table.

"I will give you all three shots apiece," he said, "and bet you a big apple that you don't guess where I have been this morning."

"Oh, Neville," murmured Mrs. Brune plaintively, "do let the children eat their dinner."

"My dear, I feel sure that you need be under no apprehension of their failing to do that. But suspense is bad for digestion, I dare say. Will you make a guess yourself?"

"I am not curious," said Mrs. Brune languidly.

"Still, you are susceptible of astonishment, and I am confident that I shall astonish you when I say that I have been at Longbourne."

A slightly incredulous murmur ran round the table, starting with Walter the eldest boy, who was at home for the holidays, and ending with Geoffrey, a young gentleman in his third year, who cried "Oh, oh!" from a precocious tendency to shout with the majority. Mrs. Brune straightened herself in her armchair, and gathered her shawl about her with a quick nervous movement.

"Has that woman gone away, then?" she asked.

"On the contrary, that woman is making up her mind to settle down at Longbourne, and it was she who took me up to the house."

"Upon what pretence?"

"I ought not to have said that she took me. I walked up with her of my own accord, and a very pleasant walk it was. To avoid future unpleasantness, Ellinor, I may as well confess at once that I have fallen in love with that woman."

Mrs. Brune laughed a little, in a forced, perfunctory way. She had a notion that her husband often intended to be funny, and that, though he failed to amuse her, it was her duty to make some polite acknowledgment of his efforts.

"I met her," Mr. Brune went on, "at the church door. I wanted to see Langley this morning about some parish matters, and feeling pretty sure that he would be reading complines or nones, or whatever it is——"

"I suppose you mean matins?"

"I suppose I do. Feeling sure that something of the kind would be going on, I went down to the church, and there, sure enough, I heard his voice murmuring melodiously within. So I sat in the porch till he came out in his cassock and biretta, accompanied by a tall lady in widow's weeds, who had one of the most interesting faces I have ever seen in my life. I stated my business while she stood reading the inscriptions on the tombstones, and then, as Langley didn't introduce me, I made bold to introduce myself."

"Really, Neville!" cried Mrs. Brune in a tone of great vexation, "you are like nobody else in the world. How extraordinary she must have thought it of you!"

"Perhaps she did; but, if so, she was well-bred enough to disguise her feelings and to behave as though it gave her pleasure to meet me. We walked away together quite amicably, and were fast friends in less than ten minutes."

"But what induced you to go up to the house with her?"

"The pleasure of talking to her, I suppose. I daresay you would have been equally weak in my place."

"I should certainly not have entered Longbourne as the guest of that woman. I shall always feel that Longbourne no more belongs to the Stanniforths than—than Lorraine does to the Germans."

"You will be interested in hearing that that is precisely her own view of the case. She told me so, blushing and looking as much ashamed of herself as if she had picked my pocket. Really, Ellinor, she has strong claims of various kinds upon your sympathy."

Mrs. Brune shook her head decisively. "I could never feel sympathy with any one bearing the name of Stanniforth," she declared.

"Why not? Here is a woman who not only attends matins and sends down a cartload of flowers to decorate the altar, but confesses her sins with every appearance of sincere remorse. Are we to be so inconsistent to all Christian principles as to refuse her forgiveness? Her sin, if you come to think of it, is not an unpardonable one; it only consists in her being the daughter-in-law of a man who once bought some property of mine and paid me my own price for it. Seriously, Ellinor, I want you to be kind to this poor Mrs. Stanniforth. It made my heart ache to think of her living all alone in that great barrack, and trying to put a good face upon it too. It would be a real act of charity if you would call upon her. And, in point of fact, I have promised that you will do so."

The silence that followed this announcement was broken by a small childish voice, which asked—

"Papa, does Longbourne belong to Mrs. Stanniforth?"

"To the best of my belief it does, Nellie. Anyhow it will be her home for the rest of her life, most likely."

"Then I won't go and see her," declared the young lady emphatically. And Walter, with his mouth full of tart, growled out, "Hear, hear, Nellie!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Brune, "you are a pretty set of young mutineers. I have a great mind to order the whole tribe of you up to Longbourne this very afternoon. After this I suppose I must expect nothing less than a flat refusal from your mother."

"Of course, Neville," said Mrs. Brune, "if you tell me to leave cards I must obey you; but I do think it will look very odd. You never consider what people will say."

"Not very much, I confess."

"I always thought," Mrs. Brune continued, "that you did not wish me to visit strangers. During all these years that the Bishop has been at Crayminster we have never called upon Mrs. Winnington, though everybody else in the county has; and to thrust ourselves upon their daughter now—under the very peculiar circumstances of the case too—does seem to me unnecessary, to say the least of it. As to my being kind to her, that is nonsense. She has plenty of friends, and needs no kindness from me. Probably she thinks she would do me a kindness in receiving me."

"I assure you she is not a born idiot."

"I don't see how you can possibly tell what she may be. Besides I must say I should hardly have expected that she would wish for visitors yet, considering that her husband has not been dead a year."

"My dear Ellinor, I am not asking you to pay a formal visit, still less to leave cards at the door. What I wanted you to do was to go in a neighbourly way, and try to be of some comfort to a fellow-creature, who perhaps has not so many friends as you credit her with. However, I have not the gift of persuasiveness, and I see I had better leave you to Langley, who is coming up to dinner, and who will probably use his ghostly authority over you in the matter. Come along, Miss Nell."

And Mr. Brune rose and left the table, Nellie, a sturdy little brown-haired maiden, toddling after him with the important air which beseeemed her father's chosen companion and the only girl out of a family of ten.

Mr. Brune had not erred in attributing to Mr. Langley an influence more powerful than he could hope to exercise. The rector of Longbourne was a gentleman who took himself very seriously, and who, as a natural consequence, was accepted at his own valuation by the majority of his flock. The female portion of it, in particular, looked up to him with an unquestioning faith and devotion which may have been called forth in part by his pale, smooth-shaven face, his stooping figure and his reputation for asceticism, but which was doubtless also due to the blameless integrity of his life, and to the known fact that he spent three-fourths of his income upon his church and upon the poor. When he mentioned his new parishioner emphatically as one whom it was a privilege to know, Mrs. Brune capitulated without a protest, murmuring that it would give her great pleasure to make Mrs. Stanniforth's acquaintance. Accordingly she walked over to Longbourne the following day, accompanied by the recalcitrant Nellie, and confessed on her return that she had found her neighbour a very quiet and ladylike person. "A little cold and reserved in manner perhaps, but that was far better than rushing into the opposite extreme, as I was half afraid from your description of her, Neville, that she would do. If she had begun about the question of her title to be where she is, I hardly know how I could have answered her; but I am glad to say that she had the good taste not to refer to the subject."

It was in this somewhat unpromising fashion that the foundation was laid of an intimacy between the houses of Longbourne and Broom Leas which lasted throughout the lives of their respective occupants. Mrs. Brune did not, it is true, at once accord her friendship to the new-comer: she tolerated her; and that, according to her lights, was of itself no small concession. But of the children Margaret made a prompt and facile conquest. It was agreed among these young people that the resentment which they were bound to harbour against the whole Stanniforth family should not be extended to this alien, who was not by birth one of the proscribed race, and whose personal amiability took forms difficult to resist. They soon found out that they were welcome in her house at all hours of the day, and needed but little persuasion to convert her

gardens into a playground. She let them come and go as they pleased, sometimes looking on at their games, sometimes taking part in them, and being always ready to act as arbitrator and referee in those disputes which sports of all kinds are apt to engender, be the players young or old. And then no one could tell fairy-tales with so leisurely, serious, and convincing an air as she did. One day Walter announced gravely that he had discovered a simple solution of certain family difficulties.

"When I am grown up," he said, "I shall marry Mrs. Stanniforth; and then we will all live at Longbourne together."

"That is such an admirable plan," Mr. Brune remarked, "that I cannot think how your mother has failed to hit upon it before this. You have obtained the lady's consent, I presume?"

"Oh, that'll be all right," Walter replied confidently. "I told her about it, and she said she would have to take a little time to consider of it. She'll have a good ten years, you see, to think it over in;—or, perhaps, we might make it eight years. I don't want to marry before I leave Oxford, though."

"Walter," said Mrs. Brune, "you ought not to talk nonsense upon such a subject as that to Mrs. Stanniforth; it is very thoughtless of you. I don't know where you children get your want of consideration for the feelings of others from. I am sure you do not inherit it from me."

"The inference," remarked Mr. Brune, "is unavoidable. Still, a capacity for better things will crop up occasionally even in the worst of us; and to prove it, I mean to go up to Longbourne this afternoon and meet Mrs. Winnington at five o'clock tea; and I shall make an excuse for you, Ellinor. I need not point out to you what that implies; for you know how I love five o'clock tea—not to speak of Mrs. Winnington."

The truth is that Mrs. Winnington had not contrived, and probably had not endeavoured, to make herself beloved by the Brunes. She was a person of the fine-lady type, common enough twenty years or so ago, but now rapidly becoming extinct. Of a commanding presence, and with the remains of considerable beauty, she was always dressed handsomely and in bright, decided colours; she carried a gold-mounted double eye-glass, through which she was accustomed to survey inferior mortals with amusing impertinence; while, in speaking to them, her voice assumed a drawl so exaggerated as to render her valuable remarks almost unintelligible at times. These little graces of manner had doubtless come to her from a study of the best models, for she went a good deal into the fashionable world at that time; but, in addition to these, she possessed a complacent density and an unfeigned self-confidence which were all her own, and which would probably have sufficed at any epoch, and under any circumstances, to render her at once as disagreeable and as contented a woman as could have been found under the sun.

Whether because she resented the slight put upon her by the Brunes in that they had never seen fit to call at the Palace, or because she had an inkling that their pride surpassed her own vain-glory, she made up

her mind to snub them; and when Mrs. Winnington made up her mind to any course of action, it was usually carried through with a will. The plainness with which these worthy folks were given to understand that, in her opinion, they were no better than country bumpkins, and the mixture of patronage and insolence with which she bore herself towards them, were in their way inimitable. There are some people magnanimous enough, or indifferent enough, to smile at such small discourtesies; and probably the former owner of Longbourne was more amused than angry when he was informed that the house had been a positive pig-stye before it had been put in order, and that Mrs. Winnington really could not imagine how any one had found it possible to live in such a place. But Mrs. Brune, who was more irritable, trembled with suppressed wrath at the contemptuous allusions which were frequently made in her presence to "bankers, and brewers, and people of that class"; and, indeed, it is not likely that friendly relations could long have been maintained between Broom Leas and Longbourne if Mrs. Winnington had not, fortunately, been due in Scotland early in September.

What Mrs. Stanniforth thought of the cavalier manner in which her new friends had been treated it was not easy to say. She never attempted to check or soften down her mother's rude speeches; for she had not that exasperating quality which is known as tact, and she was probably aware that by no amount of stirring can oil and vinegar be made to mix. Also she loved her mother—"The Lord knows why!" said Mr. Brune, who had observed this phenomenon; and it may have been that she was a little blind to the defects of that unamiable lady. However, Mrs. Winnington departed for Scotland to pay a round of visits to various aristocratic friends; and then all went smoothly again.

Mr. Langley was much pleased by the amicable spirit in which the new lady of the manor had been received by her nearest neighbours. He had been interested in Margaret as a doctor is interested in a difficult case; he had perceived that company and occupation were the medicines of which she stood chiefly in need, and he had at first hardly seen how or whence these two alteratives were to be obtained. But the companionship of the Brune children had seemed in a great measure to supply the first want, and he had himself been able to satisfy the second by an ample provision of parish work, so soon as he had found that the patient had aptitudes that way. He thought she was doing very nicely now, and would soon be convalescent.

In truth, however, she was not doing so well, either in mind or in body, as Mr. Langley and others supposed. When she was alone— and she was a great deal alone—she was listless and miserable; she slept badly and had little appetite; and no sooner had the autumn set in with chilly winds and rain than she caught a cold, which settled on her chest and kept her in bed for a week.

It was at this juncture that Hugh Kenyon, who, throughout the

summer, had been inventing one excuse after another to defer his second visit to Longbourne, reappeared upon the scene, and was frightened out of his wits by the change in Margaret's aspect. He found her lying upon the sofa, looking flushed and feverish, and coughing at every other word, and was horrified to hear that she had not yet thought it necessary to call in a doctor. Shortly afterwards it was known in Crayminster and the vicinity that Mrs. Stanniforth had been ordered to the Riviera for the winter, and would start immediately. Hugh had remembered that the Winningtons were a consumptive family, and had been seized with a panic which had found relief in prompt action. By mere force of will, and in spite of Margaret's protestations, he carried her off to London, and took her to see an eminent specialist, by whom his fears were to some extent confirmed. Then he wrote to Mrs. Winnington to come back from Scotland instantly; and, without waiting for an answer, telegraphed to Nice to secure suitable rooms. Mrs. Winnington arrived from the Highlands in no very good humour, and informed Hugh in so many words that there was such a thing as over-officious friendship; but when she heard the doctor's report, she said no more, but packed up her trunks, and prepared to accompany her daughter once more to the continent. Hugh took first leave, and travelled with the ladies to their destination.

"After all," said Mrs. Brune, with unwonted charity, "there must be some good in that horrid vulgar woman. I should have imagined her utterly heartless and devoid of all maternal affection; but I suppose I must have judged her too harshly."

"We are all of us too prone to judge our neighbours harshly," her husband remarked; "but I don't think that, in my moments of bitterest injustice towards Mrs. Winnington, I should ever have suspected her of being the sort of old woman to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."

"I don't know what you mean, Neville," said Mrs. Brune. "Mrs. Winnington is not an old woman, and——"

"And Mrs. Stanniforth is not a goose? Well, I don't know. If ever you find me deliberately spending a winter in the south in such company as she has chosen, I will give you leave to call me a goose, at all events."

Talk and Talkers.

Sir, we had a good talk.—JOHNSON.

As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence.—FRANKLIN.

THERE can be no fairer ambition than to excel in talk; to be affable, gay, ready, clear, and welcome; to have a fact, a thought, or an illustration, pat to every subject; and not only to cheer the flight of time among our intimates, but bear our part in that great international congress, always sitting, where public wrongs are first declared, public errors first corrected, and the course of public opinion shaped, day by day, a little nearer to the right. No measure comes before Parliament but it has been long ago prepared by the grand jury of the talkers; no book is written that has not been largely composed by their assistance. Literature in many of its branches is no other than the shadow of good talk; but the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom, and effect. There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually "in further search and progress;" while written words remain fixed, become idols even to the writer, found wooden dogmatisms, and preserve flies of obvious error in the amber of the truth. Last and chief, while literature, gagged with linsey-woolsey, can only deal with a fraction of the life of man, talk goes fancy free and calls a spade a spade. Talk has none of the freezing immunities of the pulpit. It cannot, even if it would, become merely æsthetic or merely classical like literature. A jest intervenes, the solemn humbug is dissolved in laughter, and speech runs forth out of the contemporary groove into the open fields of nature, cheery and cheering, like schoolboys out of school. And it is in talk alone that we can learn our period and ourselves. In short, the first duty of a man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world; and talk, which is the harmonious speech of two or more, is by far the most accessible of pleasures. It costs nothing in money; it is all profit; it completes our education, founds and fosters our friendships, and can be enjoyed at any age and in almost any state of health.

One of the greatest pleasures to a youth is his first success in conversation; the first time that he falls among congenial people, that the talk runs on some point of common interest, that words come to him full of authority and point, and that he is heard in silence and answered with approval. Next, after he has found that he can talk himself, he goes on to meet others who can talk as well or better than he, finishing

his thoughts, uttering the things he had forgotten, using his own language, or one yet more apt and copious, but still native to his understanding. The first discovery is the more striking, but the second is the more cheerful. Then is the date of his first conversation worth the name, when he shall measure himself against his match, Greek meeting Greek, and in the discovery of another soul, glow into the knowledge of his own. The spice of life is battle; the friendliest relations are still a kind of contest; and if we would not forego all that is valuable in our lot, we must continually face some other person, eye to eye, and wrestle a fall whether in love or enmity. It is still by force of body, or power of character or intellect, that we attain to worthy pleasures. Men and women contend for each other in the lists of love, like rival mesmerists; the active and adroit decide their challenges in the sports of the body; and the sedentary sit down to chess or conversation. All sluggish and pacific pleasures are, to the same degree, solitary and selfish; and every durable bond between human beings is founded in or heightened by some element of competition. Now the relation that has the least root in matter is undoubtedly that airy one of friendship; and hence, I suppose, it is that good talk most commonly arises among friends. Talk is, indeed, both the scene and instrument of friendship. It is in talk alone that the friends can measure strength, and enjoy that amicable counter-assertion of personality which is the gauge of relations and the sport of life.

A good talk is not to be had for the asking. Humours must first be accorded in a kind of overture or prologue; hour, company, and circumstance be suited; and then, at a fit juncture, the subject, the quarry of two heated minds, spring up like a deer out of the wood. Not that the talker has any of the hunter's pride, though he has all and more than all his ardour. The talker will lose his fox and run a hare, miss the hare and come in, at the end of his day's sport, flushed and happy and triumphant, though with empty hands. There are some, indeed, who will bait the same subject by the hour, as in the House of Commons, and cry treason on the man who flags or wanders. But this is not the stamp of the true talker. These talk for victory, or to improve their minds—a purpose that defeats itself. The genuine artist follows the stream of conversation as an angler follows the windings of a brook, not dallying where he fails to "kill." He trusts implicitly to hazard; and he is rewarded by continual variety, continual pleasure, and those changing prospects of the truth that are the best of education. There is nothing in a subject, so called, that we should regard it as an idol, or follow it beyond the promptings of desire. Indeed, there are few subjects; and so far as they are truly talkable, more than the half of them may be reduced to three: that I am I, that you are you, and that there are other people dimly understood to be not quite the same as either. Wherever talk may range, it still runs half the time on these eternal lines. The theme being set, each plays on himself as on an instrument;

asserts and justifies himself; ransacks his brain for instances and opinions, and brings them forth new-minted, to his own surprise and the admiration of his adversary. All natural talk is a festival of ostentation; and by the laws of the game, each accepts and fans the vanity of the other. It is from that reason that we venture to lay ourselves so open, that we dare to be so warmly eloquent, and that we swell in each other's eyes to such a vast proportion. For talkers, once launched, begin to overflow the limits of their ordinary selves, tower up to the height of their secret pretensions, and give themselves out for the heroes, brave, pious, musical, and wise, that in their most shining moments they aspire to be. So they weave for themselves with words, and for a while inhabit a palace of delights, temple at once and theatre, where they fill the round of the world's dignities, and feast with the gods, exulting in Kudos. And when the talk is over, each goes his way, still flushed at once with vanity and admiration, still trailing clouds of glory; each declines from the height of this ideal orgie, not in a moment, but by slow declension. I remember, in the *entr'acte* of an afternoon performance, coming forth into the sunshine, in a beautiful green, gardened corner of a romantic city; and as I sat and smoked, the music moving in my blood, I seemed to sit there and evaporate the *Flying Dutchman* (for it was that I had been hearing) with a wonderful sense of life, warmth, well-being, and pride; and the noises of the city, voices, bells, and marching feet, fell together in my ears like a symphonious orchestra. In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, and the physical earth swimming around you with the colours of the sunset.

Natural talk, like ploughing, should turn up a large surface of life, rather than dig mines into geological strata. Masses of experience, anecdote, incident, cross-lights, quotation, historical instances, the whole flotsam and jetsam of two minds forced in and in upon the matter in hand from every point of the compass and from every degree of mental elevation and abasement—these are the material with which talk is fortified, the food on which the talkers thrive. Such argument as is proper to the exercise should still be brief and seizing. Talk should proceed by instances; by the apposite, not the expository. It should keep close along the lines of humanity, near the bosoms and businesses of men, at the level where history, fiction, and experience intersect and illuminate each other. Into that illusory region where the speakers reign supreme, mankind must be evoked, not only in the august names and shadowy attributes of history, but in the life, the humour, the very bodily figure of their common friends. It is thus that they begin to marshal armies of evidence on either side of their contention; and as they sit aloft and reason high, the whole pageant of man's life passes before them in review. I am I, and You are You, with all my heart; but conceive how these lean propositions change and brighten when, instead of words, the actual you and I sit cheek by jowl, the spirit housed in the live body, and the

very clothes uttering voices to corroborate the story in the face. Not less surprising is the change when we leave off to speak of generalities—the bad, the good, the miser, and all the characters of Theophrastus—and call up other men, by anecdote or instance, in their very trick and feature; or trading on a common knowledge, toss each other famous names, still glowing with the hues of life. Communication is no longer by words, but by the instancing of whole biographies, epics, systems of philosophy, and epochs of history, in bulk. That which is understood excels that which is spoken in quantity and quality alike; ideas thus figured and personified, change hands, as we may say, like coin; and the speakers imply without effort the most obscure and intricate thoughts. Strangers who have a large common ground of reading, will, for this reason, come the sooner to the grapple of genuine converse. If they know Othello and Napoleon, Consuelo and Clarissa Harlowe, Vautrin and Steenie Steenson, they can leave generalities and begin at once to speak by figures.

Conduct and art are the two subjects that arise most frequently and that embrace the widest range of facts. A few pleasures bear discussion for their own sake; but only those which are most social or most radically human; and even these can only be discussed among their devotees. A technicality is always welcome to the expert, whether in athletics, art, or law; I have heard the best kind of talk on technicalities from such rare and happy persons as both know and love their business. No human being ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes me suspect we hear too much of it in literature. The weather is regarded as the very nadir and scoff of conversational topics. And yet the weather, the dramatic element in scenery, is far more tractable in language, and far more human both in import and suggestion than the stable features of the landscape; sailors and shepherds, and the people generally of coast and mountain, talk well of it; it is often excitingly presented in literature, and Mr. Clark Russell's squalls and hurricanes are things to be remembered during life. But the tendency of all living talk draws it back and back into the common focus of humanity; talk is a creature of the street and market-place, feeding on gossip; and its last resort is still in a discussion on morals. That is the heroic form of gossip; heroic, in virtue of its high pretensions; but still gossip, because it turns on personalities. You can keep no men long, nor Scotchmen at all, off moral or theological discussion. These are to all the world what law is to lawyers; they are everybody's technicalities; the medium through which all consider life, and the dialect in which they express their judgments. I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two months, in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wavered that whole time beyond two subjects: theology and love. And perhaps neither a court of love nor an assembly of divines would have granted their premisses or welcomed their conclusions.

Conclusions, indeed, are not often reached by talk any more than by private thinking, that is not the profit; the profit is in the exercise, and above all in the experience; for when we reason at large on any subject, we review our state and history in life. Here we may apply the fable of the father and his sons; there is, after all, no hidden treasure, no sounding discovery is made; but the soil is laboured and oxygenated, and yields more freely of its natural products. From time to time, however, and specially, I think, in talking art, talk becomes effective, conquering like war, widening the boundaries of knowledge like an exploration. A point arises; the question takes a problematical, a baffling, yet a likely air; the talkers begin to feel lively presentiments of some conclusion near at hand; towards this they strive with emulous ardour, each by his own path, and struggling for first utterance; and then one leaps upon the summit of that matter with a shout, and almost at the same moment the other is beside him, and behold they are agreed. Like enough, the progress is illusory, a mere cat's cradle having been wound and unwound out of words. But the sense of joint discovery is none the less giddy and inspiring. And in the life of the talker such triumphs, though imaginary, are neither few nor far apart; they are attained with speed and pleasure, in the hour of mirth; and by the nature of the process, they are always worthily shared.

This emulous, bright, progressive talking, the pick of common life, is most usually enjoyed in a duet. Three, in spite of the proverb, is often excellent company, but the talk must run more gently. When we reach these breathless moments, when there comes a difference to be resolved, the third party is either badgered by a coalition, or the two others address him as an audience and strive for victory; and in either case, the necessary temper and sincerity are lost. With any greater number than three, fighting talk becomes impossible; and you have either indolent, laughter-loving divagation, or the whole company breaks up into a preacher and an audience. It is odd, but true, that I have never known a good brisk debate between persons of opposite sex. Between these it has always turned into that very different matter, a dispute. Instead of pushing forward and continually changing ground in quest of some agreement, the parties have instantly fortified their starting-point, and held that, as for a wager, against all odds and argument. To me, as a man, the cause seems to reside in the superior obstinacy of woman; but there is little question that the fault is shared; for the prosperity of talk lies not in one or other, but in both. There is a certain attitude, combative at once and deferential, eager to fight yet most averse to quarrel, which marks out at once the talkable man. It is not eloquence, not fairness, not obstinacy, but a certain proportion of all of these, that I love to encounter in my amicable adversaries. They must not be pontiffs holding doctrine, but huntsmen questing after elements of truth. Neither must they be boys to be instructed, but fellow-teachers with whom I may wrangle and agree on equal terms. We must reach some solution, some

shadow of consent ; for without that, eager talk becomes a torture ; but we do not wish to reach it cheaply, or quickly, or without the tussle and effort wherein pleasure lies.

The very best talker, with me, is one whom I shall call Spring-Heel'd Jack. I say so, because I never knew anyone who mingled so largely the possible ingredients of converse. In the Spanish proverb, the fourth man necessary to compound a salad, is a madman to mix it : Jack is that madman. I know not which is more remarkable ; the insane lucidity of his conclusions, the humorous eloquence of his language, or his power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject treated, mixing the conversational salad like a drunken god. He doubles like the serpent, changes and flashes like the shaken kaleidoscope, transmigrates bodily into the views of others, and so, in the twinkling of an eye and with a heady rapture, turns questions inside out and flings them empty before you on the ground, like a triumphant conjuror. It is my common practice when a piece of conduct puzzles me, to attack it in the presence of Jack with such grossness, such partiality and such wearing iteration, as at length shall spur him up in its defence. In a moment he transmigrates, dons the required character, and with moonstruck philosophy, justifies the act in question. I can fancy nothing to compare with the *vim* of these impersonations, the strange scale of language, flying from Shakspeare to Kant, and from Kant to Major Dyngwell,

As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument—

the sudden, sweeping generalisations, the absurd irrelevant particularities, the wit, wisdom, folly, humour, eloquence, and bathos, each startling in its kind, and yet all luminous in the admired disorder of their combination. A talker of a different calibre, though belonging to the same school, is Burly. Burly is a man of a great presence ; he commands a larger atmosphere, gives the impression of a grosser mass of character than most men. It has been said of him that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfold ; and the same, I think, has been said of other powerful constitutions condemned to much physical inaction. There is something boisterous and piratic in Burly's manner of talk which suits well enough with this impression. He will roar you down, he will bury his face in his hands, he will undergo passions of revolt and agony ; and meanwhile his attitude of mind is really both conciliatory and receptive ; and after Pistol has been out-Pistol'd, and the welkin rung for hours, you begin to perceive a certain subsidence in these spring torrents, points of agreement issue, and you end arm-in-arm, and in a glow of mutual admiration. The outcry only serves to make your final union the more unexpected and precious. Throughout there has been perfect sincerity, perfect intelligence, a desire to hear although not always to listen, and an unaffected eagerness to meet concessions. You have, with Burly, none of the dangers that attend

debate with Spring-Heel'd Jack; who may at any moment turn his powers of transmigration on yourself, create for you a view you never held, and then furiously fall on you for holding it. These, at least, are my two favourites, and both are loud, copious, intolerant talkers. This argues that I myself am in the same category; for if we love talking at all, we love a bright, fierce adversary, who will hold his ground, foot by foot, in much our own manner, sell his attention dearly, and give us our full measure of the dust and exertion of battle. Both these men can be beat from a position, but it takes six hours to do it; a high and hard adventure, worth attempting. With both you can pass days in an enchanted country of the mind, with people, scenery, and manners of its own; live a life apart, more arduous, active, and glowing than any real existence; and come forth again when the talk is over, as out of a theatre or a dream, to find the east wind still blowing and the chimney-pots of the old battered city still around you. Jack has the far finer mind, Burly the far more honest; Jack gives us the animated poetry, Burly the romantic prose, of similar themes; the one glances high like a meteor and makes a light in darkness; the other, with many changing hues of fire, burns at the sea level, like a conflagration; but both have the same humour and artistic interests, the same unquenched ardour in pursuit, the same gusts of talk and thunderclaps of contradiction.

Cockshot is a different article, but vastly entertaining, and has been meat and drink to me for many a long evening. His manner is dry, brisk, and pertinacious, and the choice of words not much. The point about him is his extraordinary readiness and spirit. You can propound nothing but he has either a theory about it ready made, or will have one instantly on the stocks, and proceed to lay its timbers and launch it in your presence. "Let me see," he will say. "Give me a moment. I *should* have some theory for that." A blither spectacle than the vigour with which he sets about the task, it were hard to fancy. He is possessed by a demoniac energy, welding the elements for his life, and bending ideas, as an athlete bends a horseshoe, with a visible and lively effort. He has, in theorising, a compass, an art; what I would call the synthetic gusto; something of a Herbert Spencer, who should see the fun of the thing. You are not bound, and no more is he, to place your faith in these brand-new opinions. But some of them are right enough, durable even for life; and the poorest scene for a cock-shy—as when idle people, after picnics, float a bottle on a pond and have an hour's diversion ere it sinks. Whichever they are, serious opinions or humours of the moment, he still defends his ventures with indefatigable wit and spirit, hitting savagely himself, but taking punishment like a man. He knows and never forgets that people talk, first of all, for the sake of talking; conducts himself in the ring, to use the old slang, like a thorough "glutton," and honestly enjoys a telling facer from his adversary. Cockshot is bottled effervescency, the sworn foe of sleep. Three-in-the-morning Cockshot, says a victim. His talk is like the driest of all imaginable

dry champagnes. Sleight of hand and inimitable quickness are the qualities by which he lives. Athelred, on the other hand, presents you with the spectacle of a sincere and somewhat slow nature thinking aloud. He is the most unready man I ever knew to shine in conversation. You may see him sometimes wrestle with a refractory jest for a minute or two together, and perhaps fail to throw it in the end. And there is something singularly engaging, often instructive, in the simplicity with which he thus exposes the process as well as the result, the works as well as the dial of the clock. Withal he has his hours of inspiration. Apt words come to him as if by accident, and, coming from deeper down, they smack the more personally, they have the more of fine old crusted humanity, rich in sediment and humour. There are sayings of his in which he has stamped himself into the very grain of the language; you would think he must have worn the words next his skin and slept with them. Yet it is not as a sayer of particular good things that Athelred is most to be regarded, rather as the stalwart woodman of thought. I have pulled on a light cord often enough, while he has been wielding the broad-axe; and between us, on this unequal division, many a specious fallacy has fallen. I have known him to battle the same question night after night for years, keeping it in the reign of talk, constantly applying it and re-applying it to life with humorous or grave intention, and all the while, never hurrying, nor flagging, nor taking an unfair advantage of the facts. Jack at a given moment, when arising, as it were, from the tripod, can be more radiantly just to those from whom he differs; but then the tenor of his thoughts is even calumnious; while Athelred, slower to forge excuses, is yet slower to condemn, and sits over the welter of the world, vacillating but still judicial, and still faithfully contending with his doubts.

Both the last talkers deal much in points of conduct and religion, studied in the "dry light" of prose. Indirectly and as if against his will the same qualities from time to time appear in the troubled and poetic talk of Opalstein. His various and exotic knowledge, complete although unready sympathies, and fine, full, discriminative flow of language, fit him out to be the best of talkers; so perhaps he is with some, not quite with me—*proxime accessit*, I should say. He sings the praises of the earth and the arts, flowers and jewels, wine and music, in a moonlight, serenading manner, as to the light guitar; even wisdom comes from his tongue like singing; no one is, indeed, more tuneful in the upper notes. But even while he sings the song of the Sirens, he still hearkens to the barking of the Sphinx. Jarring Byronic notes interrupt the flow of his Horatian humours. His mirth has something of the tragedy of the world for its perpetual background; and he feasts like Don Giovanni to a double orchestra, one lightly sounding for the dance, one pealing Beethoven in the distance. He is not truly reconciled either with life or with himself; and this instant war in his members sometimes divides the man's attention. He does not always, perhaps not often, frankly surrender himself in conversation. He brings into the talk other thoughts than those

which he expresses ; you are conscious that he keeps an eye on something else, that he does not shake off the world, nor quite forget himself. Hence arise occasional disappointments ; even an occasional unfairness for his companions, who find themselves one day giving too much, and the next, when they are wary out of season, giving perhaps too little. Purcel is in another class from any I have mentioned. He is no debater, but appears in conversation, as occasion rises, in two distinct characters, one of which I admire and fear, and the other love. In the first, he is radiantly civil and rather silent, sits on a high, courtly hilltop, and from that vantage ground drops you his remarks like favours. He seems not to share in our sublunary contentions ; he wears no sign of interest ; when on a sudden there falls in a crystal of wit, so polished that the dull do not perceive it, but so right that the sensitive are silenced. True talk should have more body and blood, should be louder, vainer and more declaratory of the man ; the true talker should not hold so steady an advantage over whom he speaks with ; and that is one reason out of a score, why I prefer my Purcel in his second character, when he unbends into a strain of graceful gossip, singing like the fireside kettle. In these moods, he has an elegant homeliness that rings of the true Queen Anne. I know another person who attains, in his moments, to the insolence of a Restoration comedy, speaking, I declare, as Congreve wrote ; but that is a sport of nature, and scarce falls under the rubric, for there is none, alas ! to give him answer.

One last remark occurs : It is the mark of genuine conversation that the sayings can scarce be quoted with their full effect beyond the circle of common friends. To have their proper weight, they should appear in a biography and with the portrait of the speaker. Good talk is dramatic ; it is like an impromptu piece of acting where each should represent himself to the greatest advantage ; and that is the best kind of talk where each speaker is most fully and candidly himself, and where, if you were to shift the speeches round from one to another, there would be the greatest loss in significance and perspicuity. It is for this reason that talk depends so wholly on our company. We should like to introduce Falstaff and Mercutio, or Falstaff and Sir Toby ; but Falstaff in talk with Cordelia seems even painful. Most of us, by the Protean quality of man, can talk to some degree with all ; but the true talk, that strikes out all the slumbering best of us, comes only with the peculiar brethren of our spirits, is founded as deep as love in the constitution of our being, and is a thing to relish with all our energy, while yet we have it, and to be grateful for for ever.

R. L. S.

Easters and Chesters.

EVERYBODY knows, of course, that up and down over the face of England a whole crop of places may be found with such terminations as Lancaster, Doncaster, Manchester, Leicester, Gloucester, or Exeter; and everybody also knows that these words are various corruptions or alterations of the Latin *castra*, or perhaps we ought rather to say of the singular form, *castrum*. So much we have all been told from our childhood upward; and for the most part we have been quite ready to acquiesce in the statement without any further troublesome inquiry on our own account. But in reality the explanation thus vouchsafed us does not help us much towards explaining the real origin and nature of these ancient names. It is true enough as far as it goes, but it does not go nearly far enough. It reminds one a little of Charles Kingsley's accomplished pupil-teacher, with his glib derivation of amphibious "from two Greek words, *amphi*, the land, and *bios*, the water." A detailed history of the root "Chester" in its various British usages may serve to show how far such a rough-and-ready solution as the pupil-teacher's falls short of complete accuracy and comprehensiveness.

In the first place, without troubling ourselves for the time being with the diverse forms of the word as now existing, a difficulty meets us at the very outset as to how it ever got into the English language at all. "It was left behind by the Romans," says the pupil-teacher unhesitatingly. No doubt; but if so, the only language in which it could be left would be Welsh; for when the Romans quitted Britain there were probably as yet no English settlements on any part of the eastern coast. Now the Welsh form of the word, even as given us in the very ancient Latin Welsh tract ascribed to Nennius, is "Caer" or "Kair;" and there is every reason to believe that the Celtic *cathir* or the Latin *castrum* had been already worn down into this corrupt form at least as early as the days of the first English colonisation of Britain. Indeed I shall show ground hereafter for believing that that form survives even now in one or two parts of Teutonic England. But if this be so, it is quite clear that the earliest English conquerors could not have acquired the use of the word from the vanquished Welsh whom they spared as slaves or tributaries. The new-comers could not have learned to speak of a Ceaster or Chester from Welshmen who called it a Caer; nor could they have adopted the names of Leicester or Gloucester from Welshmen who knew those towns only as Kair Legion or Kair Gloui. It is clear that this easy off-hand theory shirks all the real difficulties of the question, and that we must

look a little closer into the matter in order to understand the true history of these interesting philological fossils.

Already we have got one clear and distinct principle to begin with, which is too often overlooked by amateur philologists. The Latin language, as spoken by Romans in Britain during their occupation of the island, has left and can have left absolutely no direct marks upon our English tongue, for the simple reason that English (or Anglo-Saxon as we call it in its earlier stages) did not begin to be spoken in any part of Britain for twenty or thirty years after the Romans retired. Whatever Latin words have come down to us in unbroken succession from the Roman times—and they are but a few—must have come down from Welsh sources. The Britons may have learnt them from their Italian masters, and may then have imparted them, after the brief period of precarious independence, to their Teutonic masters; but of direct intercourse between Roman and Englishman there was probably little or none.

Three ways out of this difficulty might possibly be suggested by any humble imitator of Mr. Gladstone. First, the early English pirates may have learnt the word *castrum* (they always used it as a singular) years before they ever came to Britain as settlers at all. For during the long decay of the empire, the corsairs of the flat banks and islets of Sleswick and Friesland made many a light-hearted plundering expedition upon the unlucky coasts of the maritime Roman provinces; and it was to repel their dreaded attacks that the Count of the Saxon Shore was appointed to the charge of the long exposed tract from the fenland of the Wash to the estuary of the Rother in Sussex. On one occasion they even sacked London itself, already the chief trading town of the whole island. During some such excursions, the pirates would be certain to pick up a few Latin words, especially such as related to new objects, unseen in the rude society of their own native heather-clad wastes; and amongst these we may be sure that the great Roman fortresses would rank first and highest in their barbaric eyes. Indeed, modern comparative philologists have shown beyond doubt that a few southern forms of speech had already penetrated to the primitive English marshland by the shores of the Baltic and the mouth of the Elbe, before the great exodus of the fifth century; and we know that Roman or Byzantine coins, and other objects belonging to the Mediterranean civilisation, are found abundantly in barrows of the first Christian centuries in Sleswick—the primitive England of the colonists who conquered Britain. But if the word *castrum* did not get into early English by some such means, then we must fall back either upon our second alternative explanation, that the townspeople of the south-eastern plains in England had become thoroughly Latinised in speech during the Roman occupation; or upon our third, that they spoke a Celtic dialect more akin to Gaulish than the modern Welsh of Wales, which may be descended from the ruder and older tongue of the western aborigines. This last opinion would fit in very well with the views of

Mr. Rhys, the Celtic professor at Oxford, who thinks that all south-eastern Britain was conquered and colonised by the Gauls before the Roman invasion. If so, it may be only the western Welsh who said *Caer*; the eastern may have said *castrum*, as the Romans did. In either of the latter two cases, we must suppose that the early English learnt the word from the conquered Britons of the districts they overran. But I myself have very little doubt that they had borrowed it long before their settlement in our island at all.

However this may be—and I confess I have been a little puritanically minute upon the subject—the English settlers learned to use the word from the first moment they landed in Britain. In its earliest English dress it appears as *Ceaster*, pronounced like *Keaster*, for the soft sound of the initial in modern English is due to later Norman influences. The newcomers—Anglo-Saxons, if you choose to call them so—applied the word to every Roman town or ruin they found in Britain. Indeed, all the Latin words of the first crop in English—those used during the heathen age, before Augustine and his monks introduced the Roman civilisation—belong to such material relics of the older provincial culture as the Sleswick pirates had never before known: *way* from *via*, *wall* from *vallum*, *street* from *strata*, and *port* from *portus*. In this first crop of foreign words, *Ceaster* also must be reckoned, and it was originally employed in English as a common rather than as a proper name. Thus we read in the brief chronicle of the West Saxon kings, under the year 577, “Cuthwine and Ceawlin fought against the Welsh, and offslaw three kings, Conmail and Condidan and Farinmail, and took three ceasters, Gleawan ceaster and Ciren ceaster and Bathan ceaster.” We might modernise a little, so as to show the real sense, by saying, “Glevum city and Corinium city and Bath city.” Here it is noticeable that in two of the cases—Gloucester and Cirencester—the descriptive termination has become at last part of the name; but in the third case—that of Bath—it has never succeeded in doing so. Ages after, in the reign of King Alfred, we still find the word used as a common noun; for the *Chronicle* mentions that a body of Danish freebooters “fared to a waste ceaster in Wirral; it is hight Lega ceaster;” that is to say, Legionis castra, now Chester. The grand old English epic of *Beowulf*, which is perhaps older than the colonisation of Britain, speaks of townsfolk as “the dwellers in ceasters.”

As a rule, each particular Roman town retained its full name, in a more or less clipped form, for official uses; but in the ordinary colloquial language of the neighbourhood they all seem to have been described as “the Ceaster” simply, just as we ourselves habitually speak of “town,” meaning the particular town near which we live, or, in a more general sense, London. Thus, in the north, *Ceaster* usually means York, the Roman capital of the province; as when the *Chronicle* tells us that “John succeeded to the bishopric of Ceaster;” that “Wilfrith was hallowed as bishop at Ceaster;” or that “Æthelberht the archbishop died

at Ceaster." In the south it is employed to mean Winchester, the capital of the West Saxon kings and overlords of all Britain; as when the *Chronicle* says that "King Edgar drove out the priests at Ceaster from the Old Minster and the New Minster, and set them with monks." So, as late as the days of Charles II., "to go to town" meant in Shropshire to go to Shrewsbury, and in Norfolk to go to Norwich. In only one instance has this colloquial usage survived down to our own days in a large town, and that is at Chester, where the short form has quite ousted the full name of Lega ceaster. But in the case of small towns or unimportant Roman stations, which would seldom need to be mentioned outside their own immediate neighbourhood, the simple form is quite common, as at Caistor in Norfolk, Castor in Hunts, and elsewhere. At times, too, we get an added English termination, as at Casterton, Chester-ton, and Chesterholme; or a slight distinguishing mark, as at Great Chesters, Little Chester, Bridge Casterton, and Chester-le-Street. All these have now quite lost their old distinctive names, though they have acquired new ones to distinguish them from the Chester, or from one another. For example, Chester-le-Street was Conderco in Roman times, and Cunega ceaster in the early English period. Both names are derived from the little river Cone, which flows through the village.

Before we pass on to the consideration of those *castra* which, like Manchester and Lancaster, have preserved to the present day their original Roman or Celtic prefixes in more or less altered shapes, we must glance briefly at a general principle running through the modernised forms now in use. The reader, with his usual acuteness, will have noticed that the word Ceaster reappears under many separate disguises in the names of different modern towns. Sometimes it is *caster*, sometimes *chester*, sometimes *cester*, and sometimes even it gets worn down to a mere fugitive relic, as *ceter* or *eter*. But these different corruptions do not occur irregularly up and down the country, one here and one there; they follow a distinct law, and are due to certain definite underlying facts of race or language. Each set of names lies in a regular stratum; and the different strata succeed one another like waves over the face of England, from north-east to south-westward. In the extreme north and east, where the English or Anglian blood is purest, or is mixed only with Danes and Northmen to any large extent, such forms as Lancaster, Doncaster, Caistor, and Casterton abound. In the mixed midlands and the Saxon south, the sound softens into Chesterfield, Chester, Winchester, and Dorchester. In the inner midlands and the Severn vale, where the proportion of Celtic blood becomes much stronger, the termination grows still softer in Leicester, Bicester, Cirencester, Gloucester, and Worcester, while at the same time a marked tendency towards elision occurs; for these words are really pronounced as if written Lester, Bister, Cisseter, Gloster, and Wooster. Finally, on the very borders of Wales, and of that Damnonian country which was once known to our fathers as West Wales, we get the very abbreviated forms Wroxeter, Uttoxeter,

and Exeter, of which the second is colloquially 'still further shortened into Uxeter. Sometimes these tracts approach very closely to one another, as on the banks of the Nene, where the two halves of the Roman Durobrivæ have become Castor on one side of the river, and Chesterton on the other; but the line can be marked distinctly on the map, with a slight outward bulge, with as great regularity as the geological strata. It will be most convenient here, therefore, to begin with the *casters*, which have undergone the least amount of rubbing down, and from them to pass on regularly to the successively weaker forms in *chester*, *cester*, *ester*, and *eter*.

Nothing, indeed, can be more deceptive than the common fashion of quoting a Roman name from the often blundering lists of the Itineraries, and then passing on at once to the modern English form, without any hint of the intermediate stages. To say that Glevum is now Gloucester is to tell only half the truth; until we know that the two were linked together by the gradual steps of Glevum castrum, Gleawan cæster, Gleawe cæster, Gloucester, and Gloster, we have not really explained the words at all. By beginning with the least corrupt forms we shall best be able to see the slow nature of the change, and we shall also find at the same time that a good deal of incidental light is shed upon the importance and extent of the English settlement.

Doncaster is an excellent example of the simplest form of modernisation. It appears in the Antonine Itinerary and in the *Notitia Imperii* as Danum. This, with the ordinary termination affixed, becomes at once Dona cæster or Doncaster. The name is of course originally derived in either form from the river Don, which flows beside it; and the Northumbrian invaders must have learnt the names of both river and station from their Brigantian British serfs. It shows the fluctuating nature of the early local nomenclature, however, when we find that Bæda ("the Venerable Bede") describes the place in his Latinised vocabulary as Campodonum—that is to say, the Field of Don, or, more idiomatically, Donfield, a name exactly analogous to those of Chesterfield, Macclesfield, Mansfield, Sheffield, and Huddersfield in the neighbouring region. The comparison of Doncaster and Chesterfield is thus most interesting: for here we have two Roman stations, each of which must once have had two alternative names; but in the one case the old Roman name has ultimately prevailed, and in the other case the modern English one.

The second best example of a Caster, perhaps, is Lancaster. In all probability this is the station which appears in the *Notitia Imperii* as Longovico, an oblique case which it might be hazardous to put in the nominative, seeing that it seems rather to mean the Town on the Lune or Ioan than the Long Village. Here, as in many other cases, the formative element, vicus, is exchanged for Cæster, and we get something like Lon-cæster or finally Lancaster. Other remarkable Casters are Bran-caster in Norfolk, once Branadunum (where the British termination *dun* has been similarly dropped); Ancaster in Lincolnshire, whose Roman

name is not certainly known; and Caistor, near Norwich, once Venta Icenorum, a case which may best be considered under the head of Winchester. On the other hand, Tadcaster gives us an instance where the Roman prefix has apparently been entirely altered, for it appears in the Antonine Itinerary (according to the best identification) as Calcaria, so that we might reasonably expect it to be modernised as Calcaster. Even here, however, we might well suspect an earlier alternative title, of which we shall get plenty when we come to examine the Chesters; and in fact, in Bæda, it still bears its old name in a slightly disguised form as Kaelca ceaster.

First among the softer forms, let us examine the interesting group to which Chester itself belongs. Its Roman name was, beyond doubt, Diva, the station on the Dee—as Doncaster is the station on the Don, and Lancaster the station on the Lune. Its proper modern form ought, therefore, to be Deechester. But it would seem that in certain places the neighbouring rustics knew the great Roman town of their district, not by its official title, but as the Legion's Camp—Castra Legionis. At least three such cases undoubtedly occur—one at Deva or Chester; one at Ratæ or Leicester; and one at Isca Silurum or Caerleon-upon-Usk. In each case the modernisation has taken a very different form. Diva was captured by the heathen English king, Æthelfrith of Northumbria, in a battle rendered famous by Bæda, who calls the place "the City of Legions." The Latin compilation by some Welsh writer, ascribed to Nennius, calls it Cair Legion, which is also its name in the Irish annals. In the *English Chronicle* it appears as Lege ceaster, Læge ceaster, and Leg ceaster; but after the Norman Conquest it becomes Ceaster alone. On midland lips the sound soon grew into the familiar Chester. About the second case, that of Leicester, there is a slight difficulty, for it assumes in the *Chronicle* the form of Lægra ceaster, with an apparently intrusive letter; and the later Welsh writers seized upon the form to fit in with their own ancient legend of King Lear. Nennius calls it Cair Lerion; and that unblushing romancer, Geoffrey of Monmouth, makes it at once into Kair Leir, the city of Leir. More probably the name is a mixture of Legionis and Ratæ, Leg-rat ceaster, the camp of the Legion at Rate. This, again, grew into Legra ceaster, Leg ceaster, and Lei ceaster, while the word, though written Leicester, is now shortened by south midland voices to Lester. The third Legionis Castra remained always Welsh, and so hardened on Cymric lips into Kair Leon or Caerleon. Nennius applies the very similar name of Cair Legeion to Exeter, still in his time a Damnonian or West Welsh fortress.

Equally interesting have been the fortunes of the three towns of which Winchester is the type. In the old Welsh tongue, Gwent means a champaign country, or level alluvial plain. The Romans borrowed the word as Venta, and applied it to the three local centres of Venta Icenorum in Norfolk, Venta Belgarum in Hampshire, and Venta Silurum in Monmouth. When the first West Saxon pirates, under their

real or mythical leader, Cerdic, swarmed up Southampton Water and occupied the Gwent of the Belgæ, they called their new conquest Wintan ceaster, though the still closer form Wæntan once occurs. Thence to Winte ceaster and Winchester is no far cry. Gwent of the Iceni had a different history. No doubt it also was known at first as Wintan ceaster; but, as at Winchester, the shorter form Ceaster would naturally be employed in local colloquial usage; and when the chief centre of East Anglian population was removed a few miles north to Norwich, the north wick—then a port on the navigable estuary of the Yare—the older station sank into insignificance, and was only locally remembered as Caistor. Lastly, Gwent of the Silurians has left its name alone to Caer-Went in Monmouthshire, where hardly any relics now remain of the Roman occupation.

Manchester belongs to exactly the same class as Winchester. Its Roman name was Mancunium, which would easily glide into Mancunceaster. In the *English Chronicle* it is only once mentioned, and then as Mame ceaster—a form explained by the alternative Mamucium in the *Itinerary*, which would naturally become Mamuc ceaster. Colchester of course represents Colonia, corrupted first into Coln ceaster, and so through Col ceaster into its present form. Porchester in Hants is Portus Magnus; Dorchester is Durnovaria, and then Dorn ceaster. Grantchester, Godmanchester, Chesterfield, Woodchester, and many others, help us to trace the line across the map of England, to the most western limit of all at Ilchester, anciently Ischalis, though the intermediate form of Givel ceaster is certainly an odd one.

Besides these Chesters of the regular order, there are several curious outlying instances in Durham and Northumberland, and along the Roman Wall, islanded, as it were, beyond the intermediate belt of Casters. Such are Lanchester in Durham, which may be compared with the more familiar Lancaster; Great Chesters in Northumberland, Ebchester on the northern Watling Street, and a dozen more. How to account for these is rather a puzzle. Perhaps the Casters may be mainly due to Danish influence (which is the common explanation), and it is known that the Danes spread but sparingly to the north of the Tees. However, this rough solution of the problem proves too much; for how then can we have a still softer form in Danish Leicester itself? Probably we shall be nearer the truth if we say that these are late names; for Northumberland was a desert long after the great harrying by William the Conqueror; and by the time it was repeopled, Chester had become the recognised English form, so that it would naturally be employed by the new occupants of the districts about the Wall.

No name in Britain, however, is more interesting than that of Rochester, which admirably shows us how so many other Roman names have acquired a delusively English form, or have been mistaken for memorials of the English conquest. The Roman town was known as Durobrivæ, which does not in the least resemble Rochester; and what is

more, Bæda distinctly tells us that Justus, the first bishop of the West Kentish see, was consecrated "in the city of Dorubrevi, which the English call Hrofæs ceaster, from one of its former masters, by name Hrof." If this were all we knew about it, we should be told that Bæda clearly described the town as being called Hrof's chester, from an English conqueror Hrof, and that to contradict this clear statement of an early writer was presumptuous or absurd. Fortunately, however, we have the clearest possible proof that Hrof never existed, and that he was a pure creation of Bæda's own simple etymological guesswork. King Alfred clearly knew better, for he omitted this wild derivation from his English translation. The valuable fragment of a map of Roman Britain preserved for us in the mediæval transcript known as the *Peutinger Tables*, sets down Rochester as Rotibis. Hence it is pretty certain that it must have had two alternative names, of which the other was Durobrivæ. Rotibis would easily pass (on the regular analogies) into Rotifi ceaster, and that again into Hrofi ceaster and Rochester; just as Rhotupæ or Ritupæ passed into Rituf burh, and so finally into Richborough. Moreover, in a charter of King Æthelberht of Kent, older a good deal than Bæda's time, we find the town described under the mixed form of Hrofi-brevi. After such a certain instance of philological blundering as this, I for one am not inclined to place great faith in such statements as that made by the *English Chronicle* about Chichester, which it attributes to the mythical South Saxon king Cissa. Whatever Cissan-ceaster may mean, it seems to me much more likely that it represents another case of double naming; for though the Roman town was commonly known as Regnum, that is clearly a mere administrative form, derived from the tribal name of the Regni. Considering that the same veracious *Chronicle* derives Portsmouth, the Roman Portus, from an imaginary Teutonic invader, Port, and commits itself to other wild statements of the same sort, I don't think we need greatly hesitate about rejecting its authority in these earlier and conjectural portions.

Silchester is another much disputed name. As a rule, the site has been identified with that of Calleva Atrebatum; but the proofs are scanty, and the identification must be regarded as a doubtful one. I have already ventured to suggest in this magazine that the word may contain the root Silva, as the town is situated close upon the ancient borders of Pamber Forest. The absence of early forms, however, makes this somewhat of a random shot. Indeed, it is difficult to arrive at any definite conclusions in these cases, except by patiently following up the name from first to last, through all its variations, corruptions, and misspellings.

The *Cesters* are even more degraded (philologically speaking) than the *Chesters*, but are not less interesting and illustrative in their way. Their furthest north-easterly extension, I believe, is to be found at Leicester and Towcester. The former we have already considered: the latter appears in the *Chronicle* as Tofe ceaster, and derives its name from

the little river Towe, on which it is situated. Anciently, no doubt, the river was called Tofe or Tofi, like the Tavy in Devonshire; for all these river-words recur over and over again, both in England and on the Continent. In this case, there seems no immediate connection with the Roman name, if the site be rightly identified with that of Lactodorum; but at any rate the river name is Celtic, so that Towcester cannot be claimed as a Teutonic settlement.

Cirencester, the meeting-place of all the great Roman roads, is the Latin Corinium, sometimes given as Durocornovium, which well illustrates the fluctuating state of Roman nomenclature in Britain. As this great strategical centre—the key of the west—had formerly been the capital of the Dobuni, whose name it sometimes bears, it might easily have come down to us as Durchester, or Dobchester, instead of under its existing guise. The city was captured by the West Saxons in 577, and is then called Ciren ceaster in the brief record of the conquerors. A few years later, the *Chronicle* gives it as Cirn ceaster; and since the river is called Chirn, this is the form it might fairly have been expected to retain, as in the case of Cerney close by. But the city was too far west not to have its name largely rubbed down in use; so it softened both its initials into Cirencester, while Cissan ceaster only got (through Cisse ceaster) as far as Chichester. At that point the spelling of the western town has stopped short, but the tongues of the natives have run on till nothing now remains but Cisseter. If we had only that written form on the one hand, and Durocornovium on the other, even the boldest etymologist would hardly venture to suggest that they had any connection with one another. Of course the common prefix Duro- is only the Welsh Dwr, water, and its occurrence in a name merely implies a ford or river. The alternative forms may be Anglicised as Churn, and Churn-water, just like Grasmere, and Grasmere Lake.

I wish I could avoid saying anything about Worcester, for it is an obscure and difficult subject; but I fear the attempt to shirk it would be useless in the long run. I know from sad experience that if I omit it every inhabitant of Worcestershire who reads this article will hunt me out somehow, and run me to earth at last, with a letter demanding a full and explicit explanation of this silent insult to his native county. So I must try to put the best possible face upon a troublesome matter. The earliest existing form of the name, after the English conquest, seems to be that given in a Latin charter of the eighth century as *Weogorna civitas*. (Here it is difficult to disentangle the English from its Latin dress.) A little later it appears in a vernacular shape (also in a charter) as Wigran ceaster. In the later part of the *English Chronicle* it becomes Wigera ceaster, and Wigra ceaster; but by the twelfth century it has grown into Wigor ceaster, from which the change to Wire ceaster and Worcester (fully pronounced) is not violent. This is all plain sailing enough. But what is the meaning of Wigorna ceaster or Wigran ceaster? And what Roman or English name does it represent? The old

English settlers of the neighbourhood formed a little independent principality of Hwiccas (afterwards subdued by the Mercians), and some have accordingly suggested that the original word may have been Hwicca-wara ceaster, the Chester of the Hwicca men, which would be analogous to Cant-wara burh (Canterbury), the Bury of the Kent men, or to Wiht-gara burh (Carisbrooke), the Bury of the Wight men. Others, again, connect it with the Brannogenium of the Ravenna geographer, and the Cair Guoranegon or Guiragon of Nennius, which latter is probably itself a corrupted version of the English name. Altogether, it must be allowed that Worcester presents a genuine difficulty, and that the facts about its early forms are themselves decidedly confused, if not contradictory. The only other notable *Cesters* are Alcester, once Alne-ceaster, in Worcestershire, the Roman Alauna; Gloucester or Glevum, already sufficiently explained; and Manchester in Staffordshire, supposed to occupy the site of Manduessedum.

Among the most corrupted forms of all, Exeter may rank first. Its Latin equivalent was Isca Damnoniorum, Usk of the Devonians; Isca being the Latinised form of that prevalent Celtic river name which crops up again in the Usk, Esk, Exe, and Axe, besides forming the first element of Uxbridge and Oxford; while the tribal qualification was added to distinguish it from its namesake, Isca Silurum, Usk of the Silurians, now Caerleon-upon-Usk. In the west country, to this day, *ask* always becomes *ax*, or rather remains so, for that provincial form was the King's English at the court of Alfred; and so Isca became on Devonian lips Exan ceaster, after the West Saxon conquest. Thence it passed rapidly through the stages of Exe ceaster and Exe cester till it finally settled down into Exeter. At the same time, the river itself became the Exe; and the Exan-mutha of the *Chronicle* dropped into Exmouth. We must never forget, however, that Exeter was a Welsh town up to the reign of Athelstan, and that Cornish Welsh was still spoken in parts of Devonshire till the days of Queen Elizabeth.

Wroxeter is another immensely interesting fossil word. It lies just at the foot of the Wrekin, and the hill which takes that name in English must have been pronounced by the old Celtic inhabitants much like Uricon: for of course the awkward initial letter has only become silent in these later lazy centuries. The Romans turned it into Uriconium; but after their departure, it was captured and burnt to the ground by a party of raiding West Saxons, and its fall is graphically described in the wild old Welsh elegy of Llywarch the Aged. The ruins are still charred and blackened by the West Saxon fires. The English colonists of the neighbourhood called themselves the Wroken-sætas, or Settlers by the Wrekin—a word analogous to that of Wilsætas, or Settlers by the Wyly; Dorsetas, or Settlers among the Durotriges; and Sumorsætas or Settlers among the Sumor-folk,—which survive in the modern counties of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset. Similar forms elsewhere are the Pecsætas of the Derbyshire Peak, the Elmedsætas in the Forest of Elmet, and the

Ciltem-sætas in the Chiltern Hills. No doubt the Wroken-sætas called the ruined Roman fort by the analogous name of Wroken ceaster; and this would slowly become Wrok ceaster, Wrok cester, and Wroxeter, by the ordinary abbreviating tendency of the Welsh borderlands. Wrexham doubtless preserves the same original root.

Having thus carried the *Castra* to the very confines of Wales, it would be unkind to a generous and amiable people not to carry them across the border and on to the Western sea. The Welsh corruption, whether of the Latin word or of a native equivalent *cathir*, assumes the guise of *Caer*. Thus the old Roman station of Segontium, near the Menai Straits, is now called *Caer Seiont*; but the neighbouring modern town which has gathered around Edward's new castle on the actual shore, the later metropolis of the land of Arfon, became known to Welshmen as *Caer-yn-Arfon*, now corrupted into *Caernarvon* or even into *Carnarvon*. Gray's familiar line about the murdered bards—'On Arvon's dreary shore they lie'—keeps up in some dim fashion the memory of the true etymology. *Caermarthen* is in like manner the Roman *Muridunum* or *Moridunum*—the fort by the sea—though a duplicate *Moridunum* in South Devon has been simply translated into English as *Seaton*. Innumerable other *Caers*, mostly representing Roman sites, may be found scattered up and down over the face of Wales, such as *Caersws*, *Caerleon*, *Caergwrle*, *Caerhun*, and *Caerwys*, all of which still contain traces of Roman occupation. On the other hand, *Cardigan*, which looks delusively like a shortened *Caer*, has really nothing to do with this group of ancient names, being a mere corruption of *Ceredigion*.

But outside Wales itself, in the more Celtic parts of England proper, a good many relics of the old Welsh *Caers* still bespeak the incompleteness of the early Teutonic conquest. If we might trust the mendacious Nennius, indeed, all our Casters and Chesters were once good Cymric *Caers*; for he gives a doubtful list of the chief towns in Britain, where Gloucester appears as *Cair Gloui*, Colchester as *Cair Colun*, and York as *Cair Ebrauc*. These, if true, would be invaluable forms; but unfortunately there is every reason to believe that Nennius invented them himself, by a simple transposition of the English names. Henry of Huntingdon is nearly as bad, if not worse; for when he calls Dorchester "*Kair Dauri*," and Chichester "*Kair Kei*," he was almost certainly evolving what he supposed to be appropriate old British names from the depths of his own consciousness. His guesswork was on a par with that of the schoolboys who introduce "*Stirlingia*" or "*Liverpolia*" into their Ovidian elegiacs. That abandoned story-teller, Geoffrey of Monmouth, goes a step further, and concocts a *Caer Lud* for London and a *Caer Osc* for Exeter, whenever the fancy seizes him. The only examples amongst these pretended old Welsh forms which seem to me to have any real historical value are an unknown *Kair Eden*, mentioned by Gildas, and a *Cair Wise*, mentioned by Simeon of Durham, undoubtedly the true native name of Exeter.

Still, we have a few indubitable Caers in England itself surviving to our own day. Most of them are not far from the Welsh border, as in the case of the two Caer Caradocs, in Shropshire, crowned by ancient British fortifications. Others, however, lie further within the true English pale, though always in districts which long preserved the Welsh speech, at least among the lower classes of the population. The earth-work overhanging Bath bears to this day its ancient British title of Caer Badon. An old history written in the monastery of Malmesbury describes that town as Caer Bladon, and speaks of a Caer Dur in the immediate neighbourhood. There still remains a Caer Riden on the line of the Roman wall in the Lothians. Near Aspatria, in Cumberland, stands a mouldering Roman camp known even now as Caer Mote. In Carvoran, Northumberland, the first syllable has undergone a slight contraction, but may still be readily recognised. The Carr-dyke in Norfolk seems to me to be referable to a similar origin.

Most curious of all the English Caers, however, is Carlisle. The Antonine Itinerary gives the town as Luguvaallium. Bæda, in his barbarised Latin fashion, calls it Lugubalia. "The Saxons," says *Murray's Guide*, with charming naïveté, "abbreviated the name into Luel, and afterwards called it Caer Luel." This astounding hotchpotch forms an admirable example of the way in which local etymology is still generally treated in highly respectable publications. So far as we know, there never was at any time a single Saxon in Cumberland; and why the Saxons, or any other tribe of Englishmen, should have called a town by a purely Welsh name, it would be difficult to decide. If they had given it any name at all, that name would probably have been Lulceaster, which might have been modernised into Lulcaster or Lulchester. The real facts are these. Cumberland, as its name imports, was long a land of the Cymry—a northern Welsh principality, dependent upon the great kingdom of Strathclyde, which held out for ages against the Northumbrian English invaders among the braes and fells of Ayrshire and the Lake District. These Cumbrian Welshmen called their chief town Caer Luel, or something of the sort; and there is some reason for believing that it was the capital of the historical Arthur, if any Arthur ever existed, though later ages transferred the legend of the British hero to Caerleon-upon-Usk, after men had begun to forget that the region between the Clyde and the Mersey had once been true Welsh soil. The English overran Cumberland very slowly; and when they did finally conquer it, they probably left the original inhabitants in possession of the country, and only imposed their own overlordship upon the conquered race. The story is too long a one to repeat in full here: it must suffice to say that, though the Northumbrian kings had made the "Strathclyde Welsh" their tributaries, the district was never thoroughly subdued till the days of Edmund the West Saxon, who harried the land, and handed it over to the King of Scots. Thus it happens that Carlisle, alone among large English towns, still keeps unchanged its Cymric name, instead of

having sunk into an Anglicised Chester. The present spelling is a mere etymological blunder, exactly similar to that which has turned the old English word *igland* into *island*, through the false analogy of *isle*, which of course comes from the old French *isle*, derived through some form akin to the Italian *isola*, from the original Latin *insula*. Kair Leil is the spelling in Geoffrey; Cardeol (by a clerical error for Carleol, I suspect) that in the *English Chronicle*, which only once mentions the town; and Carleol that of the ordinary mediæval historians. The surnames Carlyle and Carlile still preserve the better orthography.

To complete the subject, it will be well to say a few words about those towns which were once *Ceasters*, but which have never become Casters or Chesters. Numerous as are the places now so called, a number more may be reckoned in the illimitable chapter of the might-have-beens; and it is interesting to speculate on the forms which they would have taken, "si qua fata aspera rupissent." Among these still-born Chesters, Newcastle-upon-Tyne may fairly rank first. It stands on the Roman site, called, from its bridge across the Tyne, Pons Aelii, and known later on, from its position on the great wall, as Ad Murum. Under the early English, after their conversion to Christianity, the monks became the accepted inheritors of Roman ruins; and the small monastery which was established here procured it the English name of Muneca-ceaster, or, as we should now say, Monk-chester, though no doubt the local modernisation would have taken the form of Muncaster. William of Normandy utterly destroyed the town during his great harrying of Northumberland; and when his son, Robert Curthose, built a fortress on the site, the place came to be called Newcastle—a word whose very form shows its comparatively modern origin. *Castra* and *Ceasters* were now out of date, and castles had taken their place. Still, we stick even here to the old root: for of course castle is only the diminutive *castellum*—a scion of the same Roman stock, which, like so many other members of aristocratic families, "came over with William the Conqueror." The word *castel* is never used, I believe, in any English document before the Conquest; but in the very year of William's invasion, the *Chronicle* tells us, "Willelm earl came from Normandy into Pevensey, and wrought a castel at Hastings port." So, while in France itself the word has declined through *chastel* into *château*, we in England have kept it in comparative purity as castle.

York is another town which had a narrow escape of becoming Yorchester. Its Roman name was Eburacum, which the English queerly rendered as Eoforwic, by a very interesting piece of folks-etymology. *Eofor* is Old English for a boar, and *wic* for a town; so our rude ancestors metamorphosed the Latinised Celtic name into this familiar and significant form, much as our own sailors turn the Bellerophon into the Billy Ruffin, and the Anse des Cousins into the Nancy Cozens. In the same way, I have known an illiterate Englishman speak of Aix-la-Chapelle as Hexley Chapel. To the name, thus distorted, our forefathers

of course added the generic word for a Roman town, and so made the cumbrous title of Eoforwic-ceaster, which is the almost universal form in the earlier parts of the English Chronicle. This was too much of a mouthful even for the hardy Anglo-Saxon, so we soon find a disposition to shorten it into Ceaster on the one hand, or Eoforwic on the other. Should the final name be Chester or York?—that was the question. Usage decided in favour of the more distinctive title. The town became Eoforwic alone, and thence gradually declined through Evorwic, Euorwic, Eurewic, and Yorick into the modern York. It is curious to note that some of these intermediate forms very closely approach the original Eburac, which must have been the root of the Roman name. Was the change partly due to the preservation of the older sound on the lips of Celtic serfs? It is not impossible, for marks of British blood are strong in Yorkshire; and Nennius confirms the idea by calling the town Kair Ebrauc.

Among the other *Ceasters* which have never developed into full-blown Chesters, I may mention Bath, given as Akemannes ceaster and Bathan ceaster in our old documents, so that it might have become Acheman-chester or Bathceter in the course of ordinary changes. Canterbury, again, the Roman Durovernum, dropped through Dorobernia into Dorwit ceaster, which would no doubt have turned into a third Dorchester, to puzzle our heads by its likeness to Dorne ceaster in Dorsetshire, and to Dorce ceaster near Oxford; while Chesterton in Huntingdonshire, which was once Dorne ceaster, narrowly escaped burdening a distracted world with a fourth. Happily, the colloquial form Cantwara burh, or Kent-men's bury, gained the day, and so every trace of Durovernum is now quite lost in Canterbury. North Shields was once Seythles-ceaster, but here the Chester has simply dropped out. Verulam, or St. Albans, is another curious case. Its Romano-British name was Verulamium, and Bæda calls it Verlama ceaster. But the early English in Sleswick believed in a race of mythical giants, the Wætlingas or Watlings, from whom they called the Milky Way "Watling Street." When the rude pirates from those trackless marshes came over to Britain and first beheld the great Roman paved causeway which ran across the face of the country from London to Caernarvon, they seem to have imagined that such a mighty work could not have been the handicraft of men; and just as the Arabs ascribe the rock-hewn houses of Petra to the architectural fancy of the Devil, so our old English ancestors ascribed the Roman road to the Titanic Watlings. Even in our own day, it is known along its whole course as Watling Street. Verulam stands right in its track, and long contained some of the greatest Roman remains in England; so the town, too, came to be considered as another example of the work of the Watlings. Bæda, in his Latinised Northumbrian, calls it Wætlinga ceaster, as an alternative title with Verlama ceaster; so that it might nowadays have been familiar to us all either as Watlingchester or Verlamchester. This is one of the numerous cases

where a Roman and English name lived on during the dark period side by side. In some of Mr. Kemble's charters it appears as Watlinga ceaster. But when Offa of Mercia founded his great abbey on the very spot where the Welsh martyr Alban had suffered during the persecution of Diocletian, Roman and English names were alike forgotten, and the place was remembered only after the British Christian as St. Albans.

There are other instances where the very memory of a Roman city seems now to have failed altogether. For example, Bæda mentions a certain town called Tiowulfinga ceaster—that is to say, the Chester of the Tiowulfings, or sons of Tiowulf. Here an English clan would seem to have taken up its abode in a ruined Roman station, and to have called the place by the clan-name—a rare or almost unparalleled case. But its precise site is now unknown. However, Bæda's description clearly points to some town in Nottinghamshire, situated on the Trent; for St. Paulinus of York baptized large numbers of converts in that river at Tiowulfinga ceaster; and the site may therefore be confidently identified with Southwell, where St. Mary's Minster has always traditionally claimed Paulinus as its founder. Bæda also mentions a place called Tunna ceaster, so named from an abbot Tunna, who exists merely for the sake of a legend, and is clearly as unhistorical as his piratical compeer Hrof—a wild guess of the eponymic sort with which we are all so familiar in Greek literature. Simeon of Durham speaks of an equally unknown Delvercester. Syddena ceaster or Sidna cester—the earliest see of the Lincolnshire diocese—has likewise dropped out of human memory; though Mr. Pearson suggests that it may be identical with Ancaster—a notion which appears to me extremely unlikely. Wude cester is no doubt Outchester, and other doubtful instances might easily be recognised by local antiquaries, though they may readily escape the general archaeologist. In one case at least—that of Othonæ in Essex—town, site, and name have all disappeared together. Bæda calls it Ythan ceaster, and in his time it was the seat of a monastery founded by St. Cedd; but the whole place has long since been swept away by an inundation of the Blackwater. Anderida, which is called Andredes-ceaster in the *Chronicle*, becomes Pefenes-ea, or Pevensy, before the date of the Norman Conquest.

It must not be supposed that the list given here is by any means exhaustive of all the Casters and Chesters, past and present, throughout the whole length and breadth of Britain. On the contrary, many more might easily be added, such as Ribbel ceaster, now Ribchester; Berne ceaster, now Bicester; and Blædbyrig ceaster, now simply Bladbury. In Northumberland alone, there are a large number of instances which I might have quoted, such as Rutchester, Halton Chesters, and Little Chesters on the Roman Wall, together with Hetchester, Holy Chesters, and Rochester elsewhere—the county containing no less than four places of the last name. Indeed, one can track the Roman roads across England by the Chesters which accompany their route. But enough instances have probably been adduced to exemplify fully the general principles at

issue. I think it will be clear that the English conquerors did not usually change the names of Roman or Welsh towns, but simply mispronounced them about as much as we habitually mispronounce Llangollen or Llandudno. Sometimes they called the place by its Romanised title alone, with the addition of Ceaster; sometimes they employed the servile British form; sometimes they even invented an English alternative; but in no case can it be shown that they at once disused the original name, and introduced a totally new one of their own manufacture. In this, as in all other matters, the continuity between Romano-British and English times is far greater than it is generally represented to be. The English invasion was a cruel and a desolating one, no doubt; but it could not and it did not sweep away wholly the old order of things, or blot out all the past annals of Britain, so as to prepare a *tabula rasa* on which Mr. Green might begin his *History of the English People* with the landing of Hengest and Horsa in the Isle of Thanet. The English people of to-day is far more deeply rooted in the soil than that: our ancestors have lived here, not for a thousand years alone, but for ten thousand or a hundred thousand, in certain lines at least. And the very names of our towns, our rivers, and our hills, go back in many cases, not merely to the Roman corruptions, but to the aboriginal Celtic, and the still more aboriginal Euskarian tongue.

G. A.

Peppiniello.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITH A NEAPOLITAN STREET-BOY.

I.

If you have ever sauntered along the Strada del Molo at Naples, you can hardly have failed to notice the *mozzonari* who gather there in greater numbers than in any other part of the city. You frequently catch sight of a single *mozzonare* in other places, it is true—lounging on the steps of a church, it may be, or basking in the hottest corner of a piazza; but here is the great centre of the trade in old cigar ends, and here its “merchants most do congregate”—as ragged, dirty, an dunkempt a set of little beggar-boys as any European city can show. Each has his stock-in-trade spread out before him on the sheet of an old newspaper, and carefully divided into little heaps of eight or nine ends apiece. The lots have been carefully selected according to the quality of the cigars of which they are composed, and cost one soldo each; for the *mozzonari* are almost the only Neapolitan traders who have really fixed prices, and with whom it is useless to bargain, though even they stoop to human weakness in so far as to keep a general heap from which each purchaser is allowed to select a stump.

Perhaps you may wonder who can be found to buy such nasty rubbish. Wait a minute or two, and you will see.

But first fix your eyes on the boy who lounges at the corner of the road leading down to the custom-house and the landing-place. His name is Peppiniello, and he is about twelve years old. Judging from his face you might fancy him older, it wears in its moments of rest so astute and self-reliant an expression; but if you looked at his body you would think him at least a year or two younger, for a scanty diet has checked his growth. Otherwise his limbs are not ill-formed. If you watch him while bathing in the dirty waters of the harbour, you will be amazed at their suppleness and activity, and also at their leanness. He seems to consist of nothing but skin and bone. “The wonder is,” as an Italian shopkeeper once remarked to me, “that there should be so much life in so little flesh!” The whole of his skin is of one colour, a deep greyish-brown; there is not blood enough in the veins to lend it the warmer tint that the Venetian painters loved. The upper part of the face is well formed, and the eyes are very bright and intelligent; the mouth, however, is not only too large, but there is a precocious trait about it of something which generally appears to be merely humour, but at

times looks unpleasantly like cunning. Still it is, at the worst, a quick, cheerful, not unkindly face, and it would look far better if the hair were not shorn so closely to the head. In dress, Peppiniello does not greatly differ from his companions. His shirt is open before and torn behind; his trousers are so full of holes that you wonder he should think it worth while to put them on at all, particularly in a town where their absence in a boy of his age would attract but little attention. He is wiser than you, however, and he knows that in Naples it is only the children who have parents to care for them that can afford to run about in their shirts. He does not look at the nether article of his dress—at least during the summer months—as a matter either of comfort or decency, but simply as the badge of the social position he is desirous of occupying. In the same light, too, he regards the little round cap, of nearly the same colour as his skin, which seems to be made of some woollen material. I have never been daring enough to examine it closely. It is rarely to be seen upon his head, and its chief practical purpose seems to be to serve as an elbow cushion.

At present Peppiniello looks idle enough. He is stretched at full length upon the ground, watching a game which two other boys are playing with peach-stones, a natural substitute for marbles; but he has a keen eye for business, and makes more money than any of the fraternity. This his comrades attribute to his luck; but it is really the result of a number of small observations. Thus, more than a year and a half ago he noticed that when four or five of them sat in a row those at the two ends were sure to sell their wares quickest; for if the purchaser is in haste he will buy of the first that he sees, and hurry on; if he is at leisure he will probably inspect all the piles, and, finding them pretty much alike, he will take his tobacco of the last, in order that he may not have to retrace his steps. Some months passed before he made a second discovery, namely, that the spot he now occupies is the best for its purpose in all Naples, because the mechanics who pass along the Strada del Molo are generally anxious to get to or from their work as quickly as may be, while, on the other hand, the boatmen who return from the landing-place have usually finished their task, and have nothing very particular to do. As soon as he had noticed this, he made a point of occupying the corner before any of his comrades were astir, and he has now almost a prescriptive right to it. Some of his success must also be attributed to his good-nature. When his wares are exhausted, or there is no hope of custom, he is always ready to run an errand for the men who are working near. Sometimes he is rewarded by a crust, a slice of cabbage, or a handful of fruit, and more rarely by a centesimo or two; but on such occasions he never asks for anything, and those whom he serves in this way naturally repay him by giving him their own custom and recommending him to their friends. In fact, he is a favourite with most of the men who are employed in the neighbourhood; and this is useful to him in more ways than one.

Among Peppiniello's other observations is this—that during the morning hours it is useless for him to take much trouble in recommending his wares. Those who want old cigar ends will come and buy them ; but everyone is then too busy to pay attention to his noise and nonsense. Later in the day it will be different—a joke may secure a customer, or a grin and a caper draw a soldo from the pocket of some foreign gentleman, and Peppiniello is as equal to these as to the other requirements of his trade. But there is a time for everything, and at present the most brilliant display of his talents would make no impression on anyone but his companions, for whose applause he does not greatly care ; so he lies at his ease with the happy conviction that his own stock is the finest in this morning's market.

It consists of eleven piles, and a little heap of foreign cigar ends, which are their possessor's great joy and pride, though he is a little uncertain as to their exact market value. If a sailor of luxurious tastes and reduced means happens to pass, he will probably offer a good price for them ; but at present the boy is not anxious to sell, for he knows the unusual display will attract customers for his other wares. This special heap is the result of a daring raid into the Grand Café, which he made the other evening, and in which his retreat was covered by a party of good-natured foreigners. When he found himself in safety, and gesticulated his thanks from the middle of the street, they threw him a soldo or two, and one of them, supposing that an infantile craving for the prohibited joys of tobacco was the cause of his boldness, added a cigar which he had only just lighted. There it lies at the top of the sheet of paper. Peppiniello is resolved not to part with it for less than eight centesimi. It must surely be worth ten, he thinks ; but, unfortunately, those who are ready to pay such a price for a cigar usually prefer to buy it in a shop.

But see, a mechanic in his working-dress pauses for a moment, lays down two soldi, sweeps up two piles, which he wraps in a piece of paper, and thrusts them into his pocket as he walks on. The whole transaction has been the work of a few seconds, and has not cost a single word. The next customer is of a very different type : he is a fisherman coming up from the landing-place to fill his morning pipe. He feels the deepest contempt and animosity for the mechanic on account of his calling ; but, at the same time, he has a firm conviction that he belongs to a class which knows how to cheat the devil, and that consequently it is by no means unadvisable for a good, simple, Christian fisherman to take a hint from it in worldly matters. He has, consequently, made up his mind as to which of the *mozzonari* he will patronise long before he reaches the first of them ; but that does not prevent him inspecting all the other papers with a critical, irresolute air. When he reaches Peppiniello, he looks at his wares with a new expression of marked contempt, pauses for half a minute, and then commences to gesticulate. To all his movements Peppiniello only replies by that slight and peculiar toss of the head which

every Neapolitan accepts as a final refusal. In fact, they have been having an animated discussion, although not a single word has been spoken; for the common people of Naples, though ready enough with their tongues, are fond of "conversing silently" with each other—not exactly as lovers are said to do, but by means of a perfect language of signs. The fisherman has offered, first three, and then four centesimi for a single lot, and then nine centesimi for two. These offers have of course been refused. He knew from the first that they would be, for any *mozzone* who was observed to increase the size of his piles, or even suspected of selling below the established price, would not only lose caste, but be subjected to constant persecution by his comrades; but then, as a fisherman, he feels he would be outraging every feeling of propriety if he were to buy any article whatever without at least attempting to cheapen it. It would almost look as if he wished to be taken for a *signore*. At last, with a sigh, he places the exact price of a single pile—which he has all the time been holding ready—upon the paper, and then, with a most innocent expression, he stretches out his hand to the foreign tobacco at the top of the sheet. He knows that is not its price, and he does not want it, as he greatly prefers the Italian tobacco below: he only wishes to show that he is not quite a fool. Peppiniello gently pushes back his hand, draws a line with his own finger between the upper and the lower lots, and points to the latter. He is very careful not to touch the money, as that might lead to an unpleasant discussion with respect to the exact amount. The fisherman now makes as if he intended to resume it, and purchase of the next dealer; but, as he sees Peppiniello is still unmoved, he takes instead the heap on which from the first his heart has been set, seizes the largest cigar end in the general pile, and moves off slowly till he finds an empty place on the coping on which to seat himself. When he feels quite comfortable, he slowly takes off that peculiar piece of headgear, which young artists and enthusiastic antiquarians delight to call Phrygian, but which to the uninitiated eyes of ordinary mortals rather suggests a cross between an overgrown nightcap and a gouty stocking; from this, after fumbling about in it for a time, he draws a red clay pipe with a cane stem, and a clasp knife, and begins to prepare for the enjoyment of a morning smoke. If you could get near enough to look into that Phrygian headdress of his, as it lies there beside him, you would probably find that it still contains a hunch of bread, half an onion, an apple, two peaches, a few small fish wrapped up in seaweed, and a picture of San Antonio; for the fisherman's cap is not only his purse and tobacco-pouch, but a general receptacle for miscellaneous articles of his personal property. It is but just to add, however, that the fish he carries in this way is always intended for his own consumption.

II.

At ten o'clock, Peppiniello has disposed of all his wares. As the day is hot he feels almost inclined to have a swim in the harbour; but he sees no one near with whom he could safely deposit the eleven soldi which he has made by his morning's work, and, besides, he is hungry, as well he may be, for he has been up since dawn and has eaten nothing yet. Where to get a dinner?—that is the question; for it never even occurs to him that he might spend a part of his hard-earned gains upon common food, though now and then, when the times are good, he will buy a slice of water-melon. He would hardly feel justified in doing even that to-day; so, as he rolls up the foreign tobacco, which he has not sold, in the old newspaper, and places it inside the breast of his shirt, which serves all Neapolitans of his class as a capacious pocket, he revolves in his mind the chances that are open to him. He knows he could have what he wants at once by going to the narrow street near the Porta Capuana, where his father used to live; for there are still several women in the neighbourhood who remember his family, and who would give him a crust of bread, a slice of raw cabbage, or a part of whatever their own dinner happened to be. But he has noticed that the more rarely he comes the warmer his welcome is; and he wishes to leave these friends as a last resource in cases of the utmost need. Though it is not the hour during which strangers are likely to be moving about, it might be worth while to saunter down to Santa Lucia, as there is no saying what a foreigner may not do, and, if he is out, that is the likeliest place to find him. But the children in that district hold together, and look upon him as an intruder on the hunting-grounds that belong by right to them. They will crowd him out of the circle, if possible, spoil his antics, and snatch the soldi out of his very hand. Nay, a few weeks ago, when he stole the purse from the English gentleman, they seemed half inclined to betray him instead of covering his retreat. It is true that, at last, their instinctive hatred of law and the police got the better of their local jealousy, and he made his escape. In half-an-hour, when he had brought his booty into safety, he returned, and invited the boys who had helped him into a neighbouring *taverna*, where he placed four litres of wine before them. That was the right thing to do, and he did it; nay, as the purse had contained nearly twenty lire—though that he confessed to nobody—he even added a kilo of bread to the repast. Since then he has enjoyed a half-unwilling respect in that quarter. But Peppiniello is not the boy to forget their hesitation, which seems to him the basest of treachery. Besides, their manners disgust him. It is right enough that boys should cut capers, and make grimaces, and beg, and steal; but it is indecent for girls of eleven or twelve to do so. If he has a contempt for anything in the world, it is for those girls and their relations. No; he will not go to Santa Lucia.

So he turns up one of the dark narrow ways that lead away from the Porto, looking wistfully into every *taverna* that he passes. Most of them are empty. In some a single workman is sitting, with a small piece of bread and one glass of wine before him, or half-a-dozen have clubbed together to buy a loaf and a bottle. Peppiniello knows it is useless to beg of these—they have little enough to stay their own appetites. "Ah!" thinks he, who, like all his class, is a bitter enemy of the present government—perhaps only because it is the government—"it was different in good King Ferdinand's days, when bread only cost four soldi the kilo, and wine seven centesimi the litre. Then, they say, if a hungry beggar-boy could find a workman at his dinner, he was sure of a crust and a sup; but how can they give anything now, with bread at eight and wine at twelve soldi?" At last he sees what appears to be a well-dressed man, sitting at the further end of the low, dark room. He slips in in a moment, and stands before him making that movement of the forefinger and thumb to the mouth by which Neapolitan beggars express their hunger. The man cuts off a small fragment of his bread and gives it him. Now Peppiniello is near, he can see by the pinched face and bright eyes of the man that he, too, has nothing to spare. He is almost ashamed of having begged of him; but he munches the bread as he goes along. It is such a little piece that it seems only to make him hungrier. He hardly knows what to do; so he sits down on a doorstep to reflect.

He knows an English ship came into port last night. The chance is that some of the sailors are ashore. If he could find them, they would very likely give him something, and he fancies he can guess pretty nearly where they are; but then—to tell the truth—he is afraid. Such sailors, it is true, have never shown him anything but kindness; but who knows what they may do? They are so strong and rough, and have no respect for anything. He looks upon them as he does on the forces of nature, as something entirely capricious, incalculable, and uncontrollable. They threw him a handful of soldi the other day; perhaps to-day they may throw him out of the window. The people say they are not even Christians. Who can tell? Yet surely the Madonna must have power over them too; and he is very hungry. So he rises, and turns once more in the direction of the Porto, murmuring a Paternoster and an Ave, with eyes in the meantime perfectly open to any other chance of provender.

He goes to one, two, three of the houses they are likely to frequent, and convinces himself they are not there. At last he hears them in the front room of the first story of the fourth. It is the very worst house for his purpose that they could have chosen; for the hostess is a very—well, I know no English word which would not be degraded if applied to her. She looks upon all the money in the pockets of her guests upstairs as already her own, and naturally resents any new claim upon it, however small. Peppiniello knows her well; but he has not come thus far to be turned back at last by fear of an old woman. He saunters

carelessly and yet wearily into the street, and seats himself on the step opposite the door of the *locanda*, leans his head upon his arm, and finally stretches himself at full length. Any passer would fancy him asleep; in fact, he is on the watch. He knows his only chance is to wait till the lower room and, if possible, the kitchen behind it, are empty, and then make a dart for the staircase. He lies there for more than half-an-hour. At last the cook is sent out to fetch something, as it seems from a distance; for he takes his coat and hat. The hostess stands at a table at the back of the front room, with a tray of grog-glasses before her which are half full of spirits. In a moment more the scullion comes with a kettle of boiling water, which he pours into the glasses while the hostess stirs them. By some accident a drop or two falls upon her hand; she says nothing, but simply wipes it with a cloth beside her. As soon, however, as the last glass is full, and the scullion has taken two steps away from the table, she gives him such a cuff as sends him flying to the other end of the kitchen, with the scalding water streaming down his legs. Of course there is a howl. He, at least, is not likely to take much notice of anything at present. The hostess quietly takes up the tray, puts on a bland smile, and mounts the stairs. This is Peppiniello's chance. He lets her ascend three or four steps, and then, with a spring as stealthy as a cat's, he follows her. His bare feet fall noiselessly, and he steals up so close behind her that there is no chance of her seeing him, even if she should turn, which she can hardly do, as the stairs are narrow and she has the tray in her hand. When she reaches the landing, she stops to place her burden on a table, in order that she may open the door; Peppiniello at once springs forward, and enters without being announced, satisfied so far with his success, but by no means certain that he may not have sprung out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Round a table which is strewed with the remnants of what seems to have been a sumptuous though rather coarse meal, six sailors are seated in company not of the most respectable.

Peppiniello knows that boldness is now his only hope, for if the hostess can catch hold of him before he has attracted the men's attention he will certainly fly down the stairs much more quickly than he ascended them. So he advances at once, and with a low bow and a grin makes the gesture that indicates his hunger.

"What does the young devil mean?" asks one of the men in very imperfect Italian.

"He only wants some of the broken bread," replies a girl, throwing him half a loaf.

Peppiniello springs into the air, catches it halfway, makes a gesture of the wildest joy, and then, with a face of preternatural gravity, bows his thanks and stands like a soldier on parade. The men are amused, and soon all the bread upon the table is stowed away within his shirt. This gives him a strange appearance, as the slender arms and legs form a striking contrast to the enormous trunk. He at once sees his advantage,

and proceeds to contort his face and limbs in a way that makes him appear hardly human. Shouts of laughter follow, and one of the girls hands him a glass of wine. Meanwhile the grog has been placed on the table and the men have lighted their pipes. One pulls out an Italian cigar, but after the first whiff he throws it away with a curse, declaring that it is made of a mixture of rotten cabbage-leaves and india-rubber. Peppiniello seizes it almost before it falls, seats himself in a corner, and begins to puff away with an expression of the most luxurious enjoyment.

"What, you smoke, do you, you little imp of hell? You'd better take the whole lot of them, for I'll be d——d if any human being can smoke them."

The words are spoken in English, and Peppiniello can hardly believe his eyes when a parcel of cigars comes flying across the room into his lap.

"Ask him if his mother knows he's out," says one of the men. His companion puts the question into such Italian as he can command. One of the girls repeats it in the Neapolitan dialect, and explains Peppiniello's answer, which is then translated into English for the benefit of the male part of the company.

"I have no mother."

"His father, then?"

"I have no father."

"How does he live, then?"

"How I can."

"Ask him if he'll come aboard with us; and tell him we'll make a man of him."

"What would my sisters do then?"

"How many sisters has he?"

"Four."

"How old?"

"One a year older and three younger than I am, and they have nobody in the world to take care of them but me."

The idea of that little monkey being the father of a family is too comic not to excite a laugh, yet there is something pathetic in it. None of the girls believe the tale; but if questioned by their companions they would all assert a firm conviction of its truth. Nay, one or two of them would probably say they were personally acquainted with all the facts of the case.

"It's all a d——d lie, of course," says another of the men; "but it don't matter," and he throws the boy a two-soldi piece. The other sailors follow his example.

Peppiniello gathers up his riches. He feels that it is time for him to withdraw, but he knows the landlady is waiting below with a stick, and that she purposes first to beat him as unmercifully as she can, then to rob him of all that has been given him, and finally to kick him into the street. He is afraid that even his morning's earnings will go with the rest of his gains. It is not a pleasant prospect. Fortunately for him

the girls at the table know all this as well as he does. One of them whispers a word or two to her companion, rises, beckons slightly to the boy, and goes downstairs. He makes a silent bow to the company and slinks after her, but when they reach the lower room she takes him by the hand and leads him to the street door amid a perfect storm of abuse from the landlady, who, however, does not venture to give any more practical expression to her rage.

"Now run, you little devil, run!"

Peppiniello only pauses for a single moment to raise the girl's hand gently to his lips, and before half a minute is past he has put a dozen corners between himself and the scene of his adventure.

But the girl turns and faces the infuriated hostess. "What harm has the boy done you?" she says quietly. "If the gentlemen upstairs had been angry I could understand it, but they were amused. What harm has he done you?"

The hostess is rather cowed by the girl's manner, and she replies in an almost whining tone, "All that bread he has robbed me of—is that nothing?"

"Why, what can you do with broken bread?"

"Sell it to the poor."

The girl's form assumes a sudden dignity; she feels that this woman has sunk far below her, and her voice is very low but very biting as she says, "Donna Estere, you are as hard and wicked as a Piedmontese. If you speak another word I will never enter your house again, but take all my friends over there," and she moves her head slightly in the direction of a rival establishment.

This is a threat that Donna Estere cannot afford to disregard, but she is still too excited to be able to fawn on the girl and flatter her as she will in half an hour's time. So she retires silently into the kitchen, to vent her rage first in abusing and then in beating the scullion.

III.

When Peppiniello feels himself well out of the reach of danger, he draws out a piece of bread and eats it greedily as he walks slowly in the direction of his father's old home. He has not gone far before he sees another boy of his own class seated in a doorway and dining off a raw cabbage head and two onions. Peppiniello squats down opposite, and by way of beginning a conversation he remarks in a friendly tone that the cabbage doesn't look very fresh. The owner of the maligned vegetable replies that he pulled it that very morning in his uncle's garden, and adds that he is sorry for boys who are obliged to dine off stale bread. This gives rise to an animated discussion, which in about five minutes leads to the exchange of a thick slice of cabbage and half an onion for a piece of bread. Each now feels that he is dining sumptuously, and in order to remove any unpleasant impression that may have been left on his neigh-

bour's mind, he praises the provisions he has just received at least as warmly as he before disparaged them. The stranger then gives a glowing description of his uncle's garden, which, by his account, must certainly be the most remarkable estate ever possessed by a violent and eccentric old gentleman, whose only weakness is a doting fondness for his nephew. Peppiniello has his own doubts as to the existence of that earthly paradise, but he is far too polite to express any. In his turn he relates how his father went to sea a year and a half ago and was, as they thought, lost, and how they mourned for him, and how that very morning his aunt had received a letter stating that he had married a great heiress in Palermo, and was going to return to Naples in a few weeks.

"Ah, won't your stepmother just beat you!" says the stranger, in a tone which implies that he could quite enter into the fun of the operation.

"Ah, but she can't!" replies Peppiniello. "That's the best of it. She's only one leg; the other's a wooden one, but they say it's stuffed full of good French gold pieces."

And so, having finished his meal, he proceeds upon his way, pondering upon what to do with the fortune he has so unexpectedly invented for himself. The stranger, as he saunters in the opposite direction, considers the important question whether a ferocious miser of an uncle who can refuse nothing to his single pet, or a stepmother with a wooden leg stuffed with gold pieces, is the most desirable imaginary possession for a little street-boy of limited means.

Peppiniello at last reaches a small tobacco-shop at the corner of a narrow close. "Good day, Donna Amalia," he says as he enters.

"What, Peppiniello! you here again, and dinner's over, and I don't believe there's a bite left in the house." Her tone is rough, but she turns with the evident intention of searching her larder.

"Thank you; I've eaten to-day. I only want to ask you to take care of this for me till the evening;" and he heaps the bread upon the counter.

"What, ten pieces; you *have* had luck to-day!"

"And here are some cigars. Will you sell them for me? Of course I should not expect the full price."

It goes rather against Donna Amalia's conscience to refuse any lawful profit that may fall in her way; but she remembers that the boy is an orphan, and that the Virgin has a way of rewarding those who are pitiful to such.

"Well, let me see them. Yes, they are whole. They cost, you know, eight centesimi apiece; that makes fourteen soldi and two centesimi. There it is," and she pays him the whole sum. She has no doubt in her own mind that she is receiving stolen goods, but no one can identify a cigar, and it is no business of hers, so she asks no questions. Peppiniello puts it together with the rest, and then commits the whole to her care. She counts over the sum with him very carefully, wraps it in a piece of paper, and places it on a shelf in the inside room beside the bread. He

has already bidden her good-bye, and is passing out of the shop, when she calls him back.

"You will never be able to eat all that bread while it is fresh."

"It is quite at your service, Donna Amalia;" but there is something in the eyes that contradicts the tone and the words.

"Nay, boy, I don't want to beg your bread of you; but look here, these three pieces are as good as when they came from the baker's. If you like, I will take them to-day, and give you new bread for them to-morrow."

"A thousand thanks, but let it be the day after to-morrow."

"Very well."

He is really grateful to the rough kind woman, but he does not kiss her hand. That one only does to people of a higher social class, and he does not feel so very much below Donna Amalia.

It is now more than time for the mid-day sleep, so Peppiniello retires into a doorway where the stones are pretty smooth, and there is no danger of the sunshine stealing in to waken him. He does not go to sleep so quickly as usual, perhaps because he has dined better; and as he reviews the events of the morning he comes to the conclusion that it is his duty to go to mass next morning, to return thanks for his deliverance from danger. He has no doubt that it was the Madonna who saved him from Donna Estere, and it never occurs to him that she chose rather a strange messenger. Then he begins to consider on what numbers he had better set in this week's *lotto*. He is rather doubtful of his luck, for he has lost six of the francs he found in the purse in that way. How he wishes he could dream of numbers, but somehow he never does. The priests of course know them all, for they are learned, but they are bound by a vow not to impart their knowledge to anyone; yet they say that sometimes a monk will whisper the sacred secret to a friend. Surely they ought to do so, if only to be revenged on the government who has turned them out of their monasteries. Peppiniello resolves to be very polite to all monks in future. If he could read, he would try and get hold of one of those wonderful books which explain things so well you can hardly dream of anything without finding the number it signifies in them. Well, this time he will set upon 32, the number of Donna Estere's house, and upon 12, for there were twelve guests at table. Fate will doubtless give him another number before the time for playing comes round. Pondering these things, he falls asleep.

It is later than usual when he awakens, and he sees with some consternation how low the sun has already sunk. He has missed the best early harvest for old cigar ends, which is at its height at two o'clock, when the gentlemen who have lunched and smoked return to their places of business. He must make haste or he will have nothing for the evening market and miss that too. So he hastens off to the railway station, picking up here and there a bit of merchandise by the way. He is not lucky even there, though a good-natured porter lets him slip into the

waiting room, which is empty for the moment; and on his way to the Porto, which he chooses to take through the narrow streets and not by the most frequented road, he walks slowly, as if in doubt. At last he sits down and counts over his scanty gleanings with a look that says plainly enough, "They won't do." So he turns once more away from the Porto, and after climbing two or three streets at rather a rapid pace, he reaches the corner of one in which a poverty-stricken café is situated. Then his whole manner changes; he assumes an indolent but merry air, and begins to sing a Neapolitan song. The threadbare waiter who is sitting at the door hails him with a loud jest, and then asks in a low voice,—“Don't you want any cigar-ends to-day?”

“Well, I hardly know. I have such a large stock, and I sell so few: but let me see them.”

They enter the empty café together, and the treasure is displayed.

“What do you want for them?”

“What will you give—four soldi?”

“Not two for that lot,” says the boy contemptuously.

A discussion of course follows, and Peppiniello finally agrees to give two soldi, but only that he may not lose the waiter's friendship and patronage. The tobacco he still insists is not worth the price.

“And when am I to be paid?”

“To-night, if I sell enough.”

He resumes his indolent walk and his song, which he continues till he reaches the end of the street, when he quickens his pace and leaves off singing. Both parties are rather ashamed of this transaction. The waiter knows he has been acting meanly, and the boy, who looks upon all cigar-ends as the rightful property of the *mozzonari*, feels he has been put upon. It is only in extreme cases like to-day's that he will submit to this. In fact, this perfectly legitimate purchase, by which he is sure of making a large profit, weighs on his conscience far more heavily than any of his thefts. Hence each is sure of the other's secrecy.

As Peppiniello turns again in the direction of the Porto, he fancies that some misfortune is sure to overtake him shortly, for he feels he has deserved a punishment, and only hopes the avenging powers will lay it on with a light hand. So when he finds a perfect stranger to the whole company of *mozzonari*—a great hulking youth of some fifteen years—has taken possession of his place, he looks upon it as the result of their immediate interposition, but this does not make him feel any the more inclined to bear it patiently. Besides, he knows that if he gives way now his favourite seat is lost for ever. Accordingly he utters an indignant protest, which calls forth a contemptuous answer. An angry altercation follows, in which sufficiently strong language is used on both sides. A boatman passing up from the landing-place soon puts an end to the situation by first pushing the youth to a distance of some yards and then tossing his wares after him. This being done, he passes on, fully satisfied that he has been performing an act of justice, for he knows

Peppiniello does usually sit there, and then his opponent is old enough to gain his living in some other way. The sale of old cigar ends is work that children can do, and so it ought to be left to them.

Peppiniello quietly takes his old seat, from which the new-comer does not venture to expel him by force—he has evidently too powerful allies; so he crouches down at a distance of a few yards in front of him, and covers him with every term of abuse. Hitherto the language, though strong, has been confined within the wide limits of what the lower class Neapolitans consider decent, or at least tolerable; now the vilest and most offensive terms which their unusually expressive dialect furnishes are freely used. At first the boy gives epithet for epithet, but then he falls silent, his eyes dilate, his lips tighten, his right hand is fumbling inside his shirt.

“You son of a priest.”

The words are scarcely uttered, when the boy's knife is unclashed, and, with a spring as sudden and unexpected as a cat's, he has flown at his enemy's throat.

Fortunately for both, a well-dressed man has been silently watching the scene, and with a motion as quick as Peppiniello's he has seized the boy, claspng his body with his right arm and grasping the knife with his left hand. Another moment, and a hearty kick has sent the intruder sprawling upon the stones. The latter gathers up first himself and then his wares, and goes off muttering threats and curses. A single glance at his face, however, is sufficient to show that he will never venture to interfere with Peppiniello again.

“If you had ever seen the inside of a prison, my boy,” says the man whose intervention has just been so opportune, “you would not run the risk of being sent there for such a foul-mouthed fool as that; nor,” he adds in a voice that none but the child in his arms can hear—“nor for a purse either, even if it did contain twenty lire;” and so he pushes him with apparent roughness, but real gentleness, back into his place.

Peppiniello stretches himself at full length. His face is on the ground and covered by his two arms, his whole body is still quivering, but his protector sees at a glance that it is only with subsiding rage, so he passes on as if nothing particular had happened. When he returns in an hour's time the boy is jesting merrily with his comrades; but his quick eyes catch the approaching form, he draws back into his corner, and whispers with a downbent head, “Thank you, Don Antonio.”

Don Antonio, if that is his name, takes no notice; he does not even cast a passing glance at the scene of the late conflict.

IV.

At about eight o'clock, Peppiniello resolves to give up business for that evening. It is true the market is at its height, and he has not yet sold more than half his wares, but he will want a new supply to-morrow, and the best time for gathering it has now begun. To-night, too, he

must make good use of his time, for he will have to return home earlier than usual, as Donna Amalia goes to bed between eleven and twelve. He turns in the direction of San Carlo, and walks slowly past the small theatres, picking up what he can by the way, till he reaches the garden gate of the palace, over which he throws a two-centesimo piece, with a hardly perceptible motion of his hand, and without turning his head. On each side stands a colossal bronze statue of a man governing an unruly horse. The Emperor Nicholas of Russia sent them as a present to King Ferdinand after his return from Italy, and they were supposed by the Italian liberals of those days to convey a delicate hint as to what the Autocrat of the North considered the true principles of government. Of all this Peppiniello of course knows nothing; but the stalwart forms have made a deep impression on his imagination, and he has invented this strange way of paying his adoration to them. He does not number them with the saints, still less has he any intention of paying them divine honours. What he attributes to them is great, though by no means unlimited, power, and some such capricious goodwill to himself as the boatmen frequently show. He is not given to analysis, and he sees no contradiction between this worship and the rest of his religious creed; indeed, the bronze statues fill a place that would otherwise be left vacant in his pantheon. He looks upon them as leading strong joyous lives of their own, and caring on the whole very little for human affairs, though he thinks they must be somewhat pleased by sincere devotion. At best they are only good-natured, not good; and so they stand far below the saints, whose whole time is spent in acts of graciousness and pity. But then you cannot call upon the saints to help you in committing what the Church calls a sin, though doubtless they will often save you from its consequences. With respect to the two bronze figures, he has no such scruples, for he is convinced that their moral code is no more stringent than his own. So he called upon them when the children at Santa Lucia seemed inclined to abandon him to the police, and we know how well he got out of that scrape. Nevertheless, he keeps his irreligious faith a profound secret, partly from a fear of ridicule, no doubt, but partly also because he has a shrewd suspicion that the objects of it are more likely to pay attention to his prayers if the number of their worshippers remains strictly limited.

Peppiniello now sets to work in good earnest, and by twelve o'clock he has collected an ample stock-in-trade, paid the waiter the two soldi he owed him, and received his bread and money from Donna Amalia. He now turns homewards. It is a long way, but he only pauses to buy two slices of water-melon at a stall, and these he carries in his hand until he reaches a small open court at the mouth of a cavern, where a number of women are seated to enjoy as much of the freshness of the night as the high walls of the neighbouring houses will allow. He gives a sharp whistle, and immediately a girl hastens towards him. You can see at a glance that she is Peppiniello's sister. Her name is Concetta, and she is

about thirteen years old, though a Northerner would probably think her a year and a half older. Her complexion is sallow than her brother's, her eyes are very bright, and her black hair, which is tied in a rough wisp round her head, has been burnt and bleached by exposure till the surface coil is almost brown. With a little care it might be made to look well, but it has never been brushed since her mother's death, and is rarely combed more than once a week. Her dress is decent, but it has been patched in many places with different materials, and she is far dirtier than Peppiniello, to whom custom allows the luxury of sea-bathing. Still there is a great deal of intelligence, some kindness, and not a little care in her look. Yet at times she can break into wild fits of merriment, and dance the tarantella with all the wild passion of a bacchanal. She seldom does that, however, when her brother or, indeed, any male person is present, and to-night she follows him very quietly down a narrow street to a little open place, and there seats herself on a doorstep beside him. She feels quite as strongly as he does that it would be beneath his dignity to take a place among the women and girls at the cavern's mouth.

"The children are asleep?" asks Peppiniello, as he gives his sister a hunch of bread and one of the slices of water-melon.

"Yes; and Donna Lucia has promised to have an eye on them till I come back."

Peppiniello now gives the girl four soldi for the household expenses of the morrow, and when he adds eight centesimi to enable them each to buy a piece of water-melon, she knows he has had a prosperous day, for in hard times she and her sisters are obliged to live on a soldo each, and what they can manage to earn or pick up. The bread is a new and pleasant surprise over which her eyes brighten; to-morrow, housekeeping will be an easy task.

Business being over, the two fall to their suppers with a hearty appetite, while Peppiniello relates all his day's adventures, with the exception of the bargain with the waiter, and his sacrifice to the statues. The manner of both is quite changed; they are mere children chatting together as merrily as if they had never known want or care. When he has finished his tale, he places the money in her hand—all except a single soldo which he has hid away before. She counts it over carefully, and then exclaims joyously, "Why, you *have* been lucky! With the rest this makes seven lire and a half: only ten soldi more and the month's rent is ready, and to-morrow is only the thirteenth."

Peppiniello's tone assumes some of its old business weightiness, as he replies, "Yes, but that must be made up before we spend anything."

Concetta readily assents to this, and then goes on to propose that, even when their rent is ready, they shall continue to hoard their gains until they have money enough to buy one of the children a nice dress, so that they may be able to send her out of an evening to sell flowers to the ladies and gentlemen in the villa. "That is the way to make

money." But Peppiniello very decisively rejects the proposal, and the girl, who, like most affectionate women that have not been spoiled by culture, has a habit of obeying even the unreasonable wishes of those whom she loves, gives way at once, and all who know more of Neapolitan life than she does will feel that in this difference her brother is in the right. Still, though she does not sulk or quarrel, she is disappointed by the rejection of her plan, and more silent than usual. She has a great trust, love, and admiration for her brother: they never quarrel, partly perhaps because they are so little together, and, what is more, she never yet had a secret from him. He, as we have seen, is not so open. He never told his sister anything about that purse; but he had several good reasons for this. He does not wish her to know that he steals, for she might imitate his example, and that would be unfeminine. There is no harm in boys doing a great many things that girls must not do, and he would be as much shocked to hear that Concetta had been guilty of a theft as to find her swimming in the waters of the harbour. But he had also another reason for keeping that secret. He knew exactly what he wanted to do with the money. The great terror of his life is that some month he may be unable to pay the rent, and that they will consequently be turned into the street. For himself the discomfort would not be great, as in most weathers he can sleep at least as comfortably on a doorstep as in bed; but he dreads it for the children's, and still more for Concetta's, sake. So as soon as the money fell into his hands, he resolved to keep eight lire constantly in store as a resource against cases of the utmost need, and to say nothing about this, in order that neither he nor his sister might be tempted to be less careful in always getting the rent together as early in the month as possible. Nearly three lire were spent on the banquet he had to give to his half-hearted associates. He has still three left to dispose of, but they will go, as six have already gone, to the *lotto*. For that, too, he reserves the soldo which he daily abstracts from his earnings. It is the only way he knows of investing his savings, but he is afraid of awakening hopes in his sister's mind which a sad experience has shown to be so often fallacious. Yet he has many compunctions of conscience about that soldo, which he tries to quiet by remembering that he allows each of the others the same sum for her daily expenditure. Otherwise he scrupulously shares everything he gains with the rest. If he buys a little fruit, the only way in which he ever spends anything upon himself, he brings them some, or gives them money to do the same. What Concetta and the children can earn or pick up they do as they like with, but though she keeps the family purse, into which all his gains flow, she never thinks of taking a centesimo out of it without his previous consent.

But, by this time, Peppiniello and his sister have finished their supper and are returning to the cavern's mouth. More than twenty families sleep in that gloomy hole, divided from each other by no partition greater than a line drawn upon the floor. The sides of the grotto are damp,

and the air close and fetid with a thousand evil odours, though the entrance and the roof are lofty. You can catch no glimpse of the latter at this time of night; there is only one great starless darkness overhead, but below, here and there, a tiny oil flame glimmers before the picture of some saint. There is one burning at the foot of Peppiniello's bed, which occupies the worst place but one, that farthest from the entrance, and when the two reach it, after exchanging a few friendly words with Donna Lucia, one of the occupants of the neighbouring bed, they refill the lamp from a little flask, and then kneel down before a rough print of the Virgin to repeat a Paternoster and an Ave.

The bed itself is large enough not only for the whole family, but also to accommodate a stranger now and then, when, of a stormy night, Peppiniello happens to find some homeless boy shivering on a doorstep that does not shelter him from the rain. Three children are now sleeping quietly enough in it. The eldest of them, who may be nine, has a strong family likeness to Concetta, and so has one of the younger girls, whom you take to be six; but the third, who seems to be of nearly the same age, has quite a different face and figure. She is far more slightly built, has a little rosy mouth and tiny hands and feet. Her skin, though it is bronzed by the sun, is far fairer than that of her bedfellows, and she has fine light brown hair which would be silken if it were kept in proper order. Her name is Mariannina, and she is not in fact one of Peppiniello's sisters. This is her story:—

One night, about a year ago, when the boy was returning home, he saw her sleeping all alone in the portico of a church. If it had been a boy he would have passed on without taking any notice, but that wasn't a proper place for little girls to sleep in, so he wakened her, and asked where her home was that he might take her there. It was a long way off, she said; she didn't know where, but a long, long way. At length, in answer to many questions and a good deal of coaxing, she told him she lived alone with her mother, who, as soon as she had had her breakfast, used to give her a hunch of bread, turn her into the street, lock the door, and go to her work, from which she did not return till after dark. But one morning some time ago—Mariannina did not know exactly how long; it seemed a long while—her mother was lazy and would not get up. The child had nothing to eat that day, but in the evening her mother gave her the key of the cupboard where the bread was, and told her where to find some money. Mariannina had a good time of it for several days, as her mother took no notice of her, and would not eat anything; but when the money was all spent she told her she had no more, and that she must get her breakfast how she could. She went out to play as usual, and a neighbour gave her something to eat. When she came back her mother was talking very loud, but there was no one else in the room, and the child could not understand what she said. She went on in that way for a long time, but at last she made a strange noise and then she was quite still. Afterwards the lamp before the Virgin went out; there

had been no oil to replenish it with. Next morning when Mariannina awoke her mother was still asleep. When she touched her she was quite cold. At first she had tried to awaken her, but she would not speak nor move, so the child was frightened and ran away. All day she had tried to get as far away as she could. She did not want to go home; she would go with Peppiniello, and she was hungry.

The kindest as well as the wisest thing would of course have been to take the little orphan to the Foundling Hospital, but Peppiniello never thought of that. He was convinced that the Holy Virgin had sent him to take care of this child, and he was not the boy to shrink from such a trust. Concetta was of the same opinion, and from that day to this Mariannina has been a member of the family. She is a quiet child, with soft, caressing ways, and never has those fits of wild merriment into which the others fall; but she has also less cheerfulness to face hard times with, and when the supply of food is very scanty, she is apt to be rather subdued and to look weary. The girls treat her exactly as they do each other, but there is just a shade of extra gentleness in the relation between her and her protector, which may arise from the consciousness that the ties between them have been formed by their own free choice, or perhaps from the belief which both entertain that it was the Blessed Virgin who brought them together.

As soon as Peppiniello and Concetta have finished their prayers they arm themselves with two long sticks. A rusty fork is firmly bound to the end of that which the girl leans against her side of the bed, while her brother's terminates in the blade of an old knife, carefully sharpened. As he creeps into his place, Mariannina puts her hands up to his cheeks and falls asleep again in the midst of the caress. And now the purpose of the strange weapons soon becomes clear, for scarcely has quiet been restored than the floor is literally covered with hundreds of rats. Concetta makes several ineffectual thrusts before Peppiniello moves his arm, but at his first blow he succeeds in wounding one of them, which utters a sharp squeak as it disappears. In a moment all the rest have vanished, and a shrill yet tremulous voice is raised in angry protest from the darkness beyond. At first it utters nothing but vile abuse and frightful curses, but then in a whine it urges that it is a sin to maim and injure the poor creatures. "They, too, are God's children."

"Why doesn't he keep them at home, then? While I'm here, they're not going to nibble Mariannina's toes," replies Peppiniello, but in a tone only just loud enough to catch Concetta's ear, for he respects the age and pities the suffering of the wretched being who has just spoken.

It is Donna Lucia's mother, who, having been found too loathsome to retain her place in the family bed, has been accommodated with a sack of dried maize leaves in the darkest corner of the cave. As her daughter and son-in-law are abroad at their work all day, their children are too little to be of any use, and she cannot move from her pallet, she has perhaps some reason to be grateful to the natural scavengers she vainly endea-

vours to protect. Perhaps, too, the last affectionate instincts of a motherly nature have centred themselves on the only living beings that constantly surround her. At length the querulous voice dies away, the stick falls from Peppiniello's hand, and he sinks into a sound sleep.*

V.

When Peppiniello wakes he feels instinctively that it is dawn, though as yet no ray of light has penetrated even to the entrance of the cavern, so he awakens Concetta. She is tired, and would willingly sleep another hour or two as she usually does, but in that case she could not go to mass with her brother, so she rouses herself, and they are soon on their way to a neighbouring church.

It is still dusk, the larger stars have not yet faded out of the sky, and the freshness of the morning air is felt even in the narrow streets through which their way leads them. There is a stillness everywhere, and an unusual light on common things which impress both the children, but chiefly Concetta, who never rises so early except when she goes to mass. And when they pass the portal of the church the blaze of the candles upon the altar, the glow of the polished marble, the rich colours of the hangings, seem to stand in a strange contrast, not only to the quiet twilight outside, but also to all their ordinary surroundings. To you and me the church looks gaudy, a miracle of bad taste it may be; to them it is a little glimpse of splendour which they feel all the more keenly because it is so different from all the sordid circumstances of their daily life. And they are so safe here, too. Dirty as they are, no one rudely forbids their entrance or will push them from the altar step at which they kneel. For this is no great man's palace, but the house of God and the Madonna, and even these outcast children have a right to a place in it.

And so the mass begins, and Peppiniello remembers a number of trifles, and asks forgiveness for them. He thinks about the daily soldo

* The incident of the old woman's affection for the rats is borrowed from Renato Fucini's interesting "*Napoli a occhio nudo*," p. 67. On his visiting one of the habitations of the poor, some such wretched being as Donna Lucia's mother used the expression employed in the text, in reproving him for frightening the rats away. The Italian words are "*Son creature di Dio anche loro*," and the verbal translation would of course be, "They, too, are God's creatures;" but this would quite fail to give the point of the reproof, for the word *creatura* is constantly applied in affectionate excuse for little children, or to urge their claim on the pity of adults. When a poor widow says in begging "*Tengo tre creature*," she means to insist on their inability to care for themselves in any way, and "*Sono creature*" is the constant plea of the mother whose children have excited the anger of a grown-up person; pretty much as an Englishwoman might say, "They are too young to know what they are doing, poor things." In calling the rats "*creature di Dio*," therefore, the old woman wished to insist upon their weakness and their ignorance of right and wrong as a claim upon human pity, quite as much as on the fact of their having been created by God; almost as if she had said, "Spare the poor helpless innocents who have no protector but Him who made them."

he conceals from his sister, and has half a mind not to do so any more, though he is by no means sure it is a sin, and he thanks God and the Madonna for having taken care of him so often, but particularly yesterday, and prays them still to be good to him and his sisters and Mariannina, and to the girl who so kindly befriended him yesterday. For the rest of his friends and benefactors he prays in a general way and in the usual form; he does not specially think even of Donna Amalia or Don Antonio (though he would pray for both if they asked him), far less of the English sailors; and when he repeats the petition which he has been taught to use with respect to his enemies, I doubt whether any remembrance of Donna Estere comes into his head. When the elevation of the host is past, and the time has come to remember the dead, Concetta gently presses his hand, and he prays for the souls of his parents and of Mariannina's mother, and for "all that rest in Christ." She remembers their old home better, and thinks oftener about it, than he does, and so she is more moved by this part of the service, which he is sometimes apt to forget.

And all his real sins, his lies and thefts, doesn't he repent of them? I am afraid not. Some time ago he took his sisters to see the miracle of San Gennaro, and when the liquefaction of the blood was long delayed, did not think of all the other spectators who crowded the church, but concluded that it was some personal sin of his that had offended the saint. So he searched his conscience, and remembered that some time before he had refused an old woman a part of his scanty dinner, even though she had begged for it in the Madonna's name, and that he had spoken harshly to Donna Lucia's mother a few days afterwards; and he resolved to be gentler and kinder to the aged and infirm in future. Then the miracle was wrought, and hitherto he has kept his resolution. But his lies and thefts he did not remember. Nay, when he next prepares himself for confession, they will probably be the last sins that come into his mind. When the priest insists on their wickedness, the boy will be moved, and he will really repent, and make up his mind to give them up altogether, and for a day or two he will persevere; but then he will begin to consider the matter from a worldly point of view. The priest was doubtless right in what he said. Peppiniello himself can hardly imagine that a saint ever picked anyone's pocket, but then there is no chance of his ever becoming a saint, and *they* know how hard a poor *mozzone*'s life is, and will not judge him too harshly. In some such way he will probably arrive at the conclusion that perfect honesty is a luxury as far beyond his means as the whelks and periwinkles which are heaped upon the itinerant vendor's tray, and whose dainty odours so often vainly excite his appetite.

But now the mass is over, and Peppiniello and Concetta pass out of the church into the golden morning sunshine and there part, each to begin anew the labours and adventures of the day. And here we must leave them for the present.

Rambles among Books.

NO. IV.—THE STATE TRIALS.

IT sometimes strikes readers of books that literature is, on the whole, a snare and a delusion. Writers, of course, do not generally share that impression; and, on the contrary, have said a great many fine things about the charm of conversing with the choice minds of all ages, with the *innuendo*, to use the legal phrase, that they themselves modestly demand some place amongst the aforesaid choice minds. But at times we are disposed to retort upon our teachers. Are you not, we observe, exceedingly given to humbug? The youthful student takes the poet's ecstasies and agonies in solemn earnest. We who have grown a little wiser cannot forget how complacently delighted the poet has been to hit upon a new agony; how he has set it to a pretty tune; how he has treasured up his sorrows and despairs to make his literary stock in trade, has taken them to market, and squabbled with publishers and writhed under petty critics, and purred and bridled under judicious flattery; and we begin to resent his demand upon our sympathies. Are not poetry and art a terrible waste of energy in a world where so much energy is already being dissipated? The great musician, according to the well-worn anecdote, hears the people crying for bread in the street, and the wave of emotion passing through his mind comes out in the shape, not of active benevolence, but of some new and exquisite jangle of sounds. It is all very well. The musician, as is probable enough, could have done nothing better. But there are times when we feel that we would rather have the actual sounds, the downright utterance of an agonised human being, than the far-away echo of passion set up in the artistic brain. We prefer the roar of the tempest to the squeaking of the æolian harp. We tire of the skilfully prepared sentiment, the pretty fancies, the unreal imaginations, and long for the harsh, crude, substantial fact, the actual utterance of men struggling in the dire grasp of unmitigated realities. We want to see Nature itself, not to look at the distorted images presented in the magical mirror of a Shakspeare. The purpose of playing is, as that excellent authority is constantly brought to us, to show the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. But, upon that hypothesis, why should we not see the age itself instead of being bothered by impossible kings and queens and ghosts mixed up in supernatural catastrophes? If this theory of art be sound, is not the most realistic historian the only artist? Nay, since every historian is more or less a sophisticator, should we not go back to the materials from which histories are made?

I feel some touch of sympathy for those simple-minded readers who avowedly prefer the police reports to any other kind of literature. There at least they come into contact with solid facts; shocking, it may be, to well-regulated minds, but possessing all the charm of their brutal reality; not worked into the carefully doctored theories and rose-coloured pictures set forth by the judicious author, whose real aim is to pose as an amiable and interesting being. It is true that there are certain objections to such studies. They generally imply a wrong state of mind in the student. He too often reads, it is to be feared, with that pleasure in loathsome details which seems to spring from a survival of the old cruel instincts capable of finding pleasure in the sight of torture and bloodshed. Certainly one would not, even in a passing phrase, suggest that the indulgence of such a temper can be anything but loathsome. But it is not necessary to assume this evil propensity in all cases; or what must be our judgment of the many excellent members of society who studied day by day the reports of the Tichborne case, for example, and felt that there was a real blank in their lives when the newspapers had to fill their columns with nothing better than discussions of international relations and social reforms? You might perhaps laugh at such a man if he asserted that he was conscientiously studying human nature. But you might give him credit if he replied that he was reading a novel which atoned for any defects of construction by the incomparable interest of reality. And the reply would be more plausible in defence of another kind of reading. When literature palls upon me I sometimes turn for relief to the great collection of State Trials. They are nothing, you may say, but the police reports of the past. But it makes all the difference that they are of the past. I may be ashamed of myself when I read some hideous revelation of modern crime, not to stimulate my ardour as a patriot and a reformer, but to add a zest to my comfortable chair in the club window or at the bar of my favourite public house. But I can read without such a pang of remorse about Charles I. and the regicides. I can do nothing for them. I cannot turn the tide of battle at Naseby, or rush into the streets with the enthusiastic Venner. They make no appeal to me for help, and I have not to harden my heart by resisting, but only for a sympathy which cannot be wasted because it could not be turned to account. I may indulge in it, for it strengthens the bond between me and my ancestors. My sense of relationship is stimulated and strengthened as I gaze at the forms sinking slowly beyond my grasp down into the abyss of the past, and try in imagination to raise them once more to the surface. I do all that I can for them in simply acknowledging that they form a part of the great process in which I am for the instant on the knife-edge of actual existence, and unreal only in the sense in which the last motion of my pen is unreal now. "I was once," says one of the earliest performers, "a looker-on of the pageant as others be here now, but now, woe is me! I am a player in that doleful tragedy." This "now" is become our "once," and we may leave it to

the harmless enthusiasts who play at metaphysics to explain or to darken the meaning of the familiar phrase. Whatever time may be—a point, I believe, not quite settled—there is always a singular fascination in any study which makes us vividly conscious of its ceaseless lapse, and gives us the sense of rolling back the ever closing scroll. Historians, especially of the graphic variety, try to do that service for us; but we can only get the full enjoyment by studying at firsthand direct contemporary reports of actual words and deeds.

The charm of the State Trials is in the singular fulness and apparent authenticity of many of the reports of *viva voce* examinations. There are not more links between us, for example, and Sir Nicholas Throgmorton—whose words I have just quoted—than between us and the last witness at a contemporary trial. The very words are given fresh from the speaker's mouth. The volumes of course contain vast masses of the dismal materials which can be quarried only by the patience of a Dryasdust. If we open them at random we may come upon reading which is anything but exhilarating. There are pages upon pages of constitutional eloquence in the Sacheverell case about the blessed revolution, and the social compact and the theory of passive resistance, which are as hopelessly unreadable as the last parliamentary debate in the *Times*. If we chance upon the great case of Shipmoney, and the arguments for and against the immortal Hampden, we have to dig through strata of legal antiquarianism solid enough to daunt the most intrepid explorer. And, as trials expand in later times, and the efforts of the British barrister to establish certain important rules of evidence become fully reported, we, as innocent laymen, feel bound to withdraw from the sacred place. Indeed, one is forced to ask in passing whether any English lawyer, with one exception, ever made a speech in court which it was possible for any one, not a lawyer, to read in cold blood. Speeches, of course, have been made beyond number of admirable efficacy for the persuasion of judges and juries; but so far as the State Trials inform us, one can only suppose that lawyers regarded eloquence as a deadly sin, perhaps because jurymen had a kind of dumb instinct which led them to associate eloquence with humbug. The one exception is Erskine, whose speeches are true works of art, and perfect models of lucid logical exposition. The strangely inarticulate utterance of his brethren reconciles us in a literary sense to the rule—outrageous in a moral and political point of view—which for centuries forbade the assistance of counsel in the most serious cases. In the older trials, therefore, we assist at a series of tragedies, which may shock our sense of justice, but in their rough-and-ready fashion go at once to the point and show us all the passions of human beings fighting in deadly earnest over the issues of life and death. The unities of time and place are strictly observed. In the good old days the jury, when once empanelled, had to go on to the end. There was no dilatory adjourning from day to day.* As wrestlers who have once taken hold must struggle

* In the trial of Horne Tooke in 1794 it was decided by the judges that an ad-

till one touches earth, the prisoner had to finish his agony there and then. The case might go on by candlelight, and into the early hours of a second morning, till even the spectators, wedged together in the close court, with a pestilential atmosphere, loaded, if they had only known it, with the germs of gaol fever, were well-nigh exhausted; till the judge confessed himself too faint to sum up, and even to recollect the evidence; till the unfortunate prisoner, browbeaten by the judge and the opposite counsel, bewildered by the legal subtleties, often surprised by unexpected evidence, and unable to produce contradictory witnesses at the instant, overwhelmed with all the labour and impossibility of a task to which he was totally unaccustomed, could only stammer out a vague assertion of innocence. Here and there some sturdy prisoner—a Throgmorton or a Lilburne—thus brought to bay under every disadvantage, managed to fight his way through, and to persuade a jury to let him off even at their own peril. As time goes on, things get better, and the professions of fair play have more reality; but it is also true that the performance becomes less exciting. In the degenerate eighteenth century it came to be settled that a minister might be turned out of office without losing his head; and it is perhaps only from an æsthetic point of view that the old practice was better, which provided historians with so many moving stories of judicial tyranny. But in that point of view we may certainly prefer the old system, for the tragedies generally have a worthy ending; and instead of those sudden interventions of a benevolent author which are meant to save our feelings at the end of a modern novel, we are generally thrilled by a scene on the scaffold, in which it is rare indeed for the actors to play their parts unworthily.

The most interesting period of the State Trials is perhaps the last half of the seventeenth century, when the art of reporting seems to have been sufficiently developed to give a minute verbal record—vivid as a photograph—of the actual scene, and before the interest was diluted by floods of legal rhetoric. Pepys himself does not restore the past more vividly than do some of those anonymous reporters. The records indeed of the trials give the fullest picture of a social period, which is too often treated from some limited point of view. The great political movements of the day leave their mark upon the trials; the last struggle of parties was fought out by judges and juries with whatever partiality in open court. We may start, if we please, with the “memorable scene” in which Charles I. won his title to martyrdom; then comes the gloomy procession of regicides; and presently to come we have the martyrs to the Popish plot, and they are followed by the Whig martyr, Russell, and by the miserable victims who got the worst of Sedgemoor fight. The Church of England has its share of interest in the exciting case of the Seven Bishops; and Nonconformists are represented by Baxter’s sufferings under Jeffreys, and by luckless frequenters of prohibited conventicles; and

journment might take place in case of “physical necessity,” but the only previous case of an adjournment cited was that of Canning (in 1753).

beneath the more stirring events described in different histories, we have strange glimpses of the domestic histories which were being transacted at the time; there are murderers and forgers and housebreakers, who cared little for Whig or Tory; superstition is represented by an occasional case of witchcraft. And we have some curious illustrations of the manners and customs of the fast young men of the period, the dissolute noblemen, the "sons of Belial flown with insolence and wine," who disturbed Milton's meditations, and got upon the stage to see Nell Gwyn and Mrs. Bracegirdle, in the comedies of Dryden and Etherege. It is unfair to take the reports of a police court as fully representing the characteristics of a time; but there never was a time which left a fuller impression of its idiosyncrasies in such an unsavoury record office. Let us pick up a case or two pretty much at random.

It is pleasantest, perhaps, to avoid the more familiar and pompous scenes. It is rather in the byplay—in the little vignettes of real life which turn up amidst more serious events—that we may find the characteristic charm of the narrative. The trials, for example, of the regicides have an interest. They died for the most part (Hugh Peters seems to have been an exception) as became the survivors of the terrible Ironsides, glorying, till drums beat under the scaffold to silence them, in their fidelity to the "good old cause," and showing a stern front to the jubilant royalists. But one must admit that they show something, too, of the peculiarities which made the race tiresome to their contemporaries as they probably would be to us. They cannot submit without a wrangle—which they know to be futile—over some legal point, where simple submission to the inevitable would have been more dignified; and their dying prayers and orations are echoes of the long-winded sermons of the Blathergows. They showed fully as much courage, but not so much taste as the "royal actor" on the same scene. But amidst the trials there occurs here and there a fragment of picturesque evidence. A waterman tells us how he was walking about Whitehall on the morning of the "fatal blow." "Down came a file of musketeers." They hurried the hangman into his boat, and said, "Waterman, away with him; begone quickly." "So," says the waterman, "out I launched, and having got a little way in the water, says I, 'Who the devil have I got in my boat?' Says my fellow, says he, 'Why?' I directed my speech to him, saying, 'Are you the hangman that cut off the King's head?' 'No, as I am a sinner to God,' saith he, 'not I.' He shook, every joint of him. I knew not what to do. I rowed away a little further, and fell to a new examination of him. 'Tell me true,' says I, 'are you the hangman that hath cut off the King's head? I cannot carry you,' said I. 'No,' saith he;" and explains that his instruments had been used, but not himself; and though the waterman threatened to sink his boat, the supposed hangman stuck to his story, and was presumably landed in safety. The evidence seems to be rather ambiguous as concerns the prisoner, who was accused of being the actual executioner; but the vivacity with which Mr. Abra-

ham Smith tells his story is admirable. Doubtless it had been his favourite anecdote to his fellows and his fares during the intervening years, and he felt, rightly as it has turned out, that this accidental contact with one of the great events of history would be his sole title to a kind of obscure immortality.

Another hero of that time, unfortunately a principal instead of a mere spectator in the recorded tragedy, is so full of exuberant vitality that we can scarcely reconcile ourselves to the belief that the poor man was hanged two centuries ago. The gallant Colonel Turner had served in the royal army, and, if we may believe his dying words, was specially valued by his Majesty. The poor colonel, however, got into difficulties: he made acquaintance with a rich old merchant named Tryon, and tried to get a will forged in his favour by one of Tryon's clerks; failing in this, he decided upon speedier measures. He tied down poor old Tryon in his bed one night, and then carried off jewels to the value of 3,000*l*. An energetic alderman suspected the colonel, clutched him a day or two afterwards, and forced him to disgorge. When put upon his defence, he could only tell one of those familiar fictions common to pickpockets; how he had accidentally collared the thief, who had transferred the stolen goods to him, and how he was thus entitled to gratitude instead of punishment. It is not surprising that the jury declined to believe him; but we are almost surprised that any judge had the courage to sentence him. For Colonel Turner is a splendid scoundrel. There is something truly heroic in his magnificent self-complacency; the fine placid glow of conscious virtue diffused over his speeches. He is a link between Dugald Dalgetty, Captain Bobadil, and the audacious promoter of some modern financiering scheme. Had he lived in days when old merchants invest their savings in shares instead of diamonds, he would have been an invaluable director of a bubble company. There is a dash of the Pecksniff about him; but he has far too much pith and courage to be dashed like that miserable creature by a single exposure. Old Chuzzlewit would never have broken loose from his bonds. It is delightful to see, in days when most criminals prostrated themselves in abject humiliation, how this splendid colonel takes the Lord Chief Justice into his confidence, verbally button-holes "my dear lord" with a pleasant assumption that, though for form's sake some inquiry might be necessary, every reasonable man must see the humour of an accusation directed against so innocent a patriot. The whole thing is manifestly absurd. And then the colonel gracefully slides in little compliments to his own domestic virtues. Part of his story had to be that he had sent his wife (who was accused as an accomplice) on an embassy to recover the stolen goods. "I sent my poor wife away," he says, "and, saving your lordship's presence, she did all bedirt herself—a thing she did not use to do, poor soul. She found this Nagshead, she sat down, being somewhat fat and weary, poor heart! I have had twenty-seven children by her, fifteen sons and twelve daughters." "Seven or eight times this fellow did round her." "Let me give that relation,"

interrupts the wife. "You cannot," replies the colonel, "it is as well. Prythee, sit down, dear Moll; sit thee down, good child, all will be well." And so the colonel proceeds with admirable volubility, and we sympathise with this admirable father of twenty-seven children under so cruel a hardship. But—not to follow the trial—the colonel culminated under the most trying circumstances. His dying speech is superb. He is honourably confessing his sins; but his natural instinct asserts itself. He cannot but admit, in common honesty, that he is a model character, and speaks under his gallows as if he were the good apprentice just arrived at the mayoralty. He admits, indeed, that he occasionally gave way to swearing, though he "hated and loathed" the sin when he observed it; but he was—it was the source of all his troubles—of a "hasty nature." But he was brought up in an honest family in the good old times, and laments the bad times that have since come in. He has been a devoted loyalist; he has lived civilly and honestly at the upper end of Cheapside as became a freeman of the Company of Drapers; he was never known to be "disguised in drink;" a small cup of cider in the morning, and two little glasses of sack and one of claret at dinner, were enough for him; he was a constant churchgoer, and of such delicate propriety of behaviour that he never "saw a man in church with his hat on but it troubled him very much" (a phrase which reminds us of Johnson's famous friend); "there must be," he is sure, when he thinks of all his virtues, "a thousand sorrowful souls and weeping eyes" for him this day. The attendant clergy are a little scandalised at this peculiar kind of penitence; and he is good enough to declare that he "disclaims any desert of his own"—a sentiment which we feel to be a graceful concession, but not to be too strictly interpreted. The hangman is obliged to put the rope round his neck. "*Dost thou mean to choke me, fellow?*" exclaims the indignant colonel. "What a simple fellow is this! how long have you been executioner that you know not how to put the knot?" He then utters some pious ejaculations, and as he is assuming the fatal cap, sees a lady at a window; he kisses his hand to her, and says, "Your servant, Mistress;" and so pulling down the cap, the brave colonel vanishes, as the reporter tells us, with a very undaunted carriage to his last breath.

Sir Thomas More with his flashes of playfulness, or Charles with his solemn "remember," could scarcely play their parts more gallantly than Colonel Turner, and they had the advantage of a belief in the goodness of their cause. Perhaps it is illogical to sympathise all the more with poor Colonel Turner, because we know that his courage had not the adventitious aid of a good conscience. But surely he was a very prince of burglars! We turn a page and come to a very different question of casuistry. Law and morality are at a deadlock. Instead of the florid, swaggering cavalier, we have a pair of Quakers, Margaret Fell and the famous George Fox, arguing with the most irritating calmness and logic against the imposition of an oath. "Give me the book in my

hand," says Fox; and they are all gazing in hopes that he is about to swear. Then he holds up the Bible and exclaims, "This book commands me not to swear." To which dramatic argument (the report, it is to be observed, comes from Fox's side) there is no possible reply but to "pluck the book forth of his hand again," and send him back to prison. The Quakers vanish in their invincible passiveness; and in the next page, we find ourselves at Bury St. Edmunds. The venerated Sir Matthew Hale is on the bench, and the learned and eloquent Sir Thomas Browne appears in the witness-box. They listen to a wretched story of two poor old women accused of bewitching children. The children swear that they have been tormented by imps, in the shape of flies, which flew into their mouths with crooked pins—the said imps being presumably the diabolical emissaries of the witches. Then Sir Thomas Browne gravely delivers his opinion; he quotes a case of witchcraft in Denmark, and decides, after due talk about "superabundant humours" and judicious balancing of conflicting considerations, that the fits into which the children fell were strictly natural, but "heightened to a great excess by the subtlety of the devil co-operating with the malice of the witches." An "ingenious person," however, suggests an experiment. The child who had sworn that the touch of the witch threw her into fits, was blindfolded and touched by another person passed off as the witch. The young sinner fell into the same fits, and the "ingenious person" pronounced the whole affair to be an imposture. However, a more ingenious person gets up and proves by dexterous logic, curiously like that of a detected "medium" of to-day, that, on the contrary, it confirms the evidence.* Whereupon, the witches were found guilty, the judge and all the court being fully satisfied with the verdict, and were hanged accordingly, though absolutely refusing to confess.

Our ancestors' justice strikes us as rather heavy-handed and dull-eyed on these occasions. In another class of trials we see the opposite phase—the manifestation of that curious tenderness which has shown itself in so many forms since the days when highway robbery appeared to be a graceful accomplishment if practised by a wild Prince and Poins. Things were made delightfully easy in the race which flourished after the Restoration. Every Peer, by the amazing privilege of the "benefit of clergy," had a right to commit one manslaughter. Like a school-boy, he was allowed to plead "first fault;" and a good many Peers took advantage of the system.

Lord Morley, for example, has a quarrel "about half-a-crown." A Mr. Hastings, against whom he has some previous grudge, contemptuously throws down four half-crowns. Therefore Lord Morley and an attendant bully insult Hastings, assault him repeatedly, and at last fall upon

* This case was in 1665. It is curious that in the case of Hathaway in 1702, a precisely similar experiment convinced everybody that the accuser was an impostor; and got him a whipping and a place in the pillory.

him "just under the arch in Lincoln's Inn Fields," and there Lord Morley stabs him to death, "with a desperate imprecation." The Attorney-General argues that this shows malice, and urges that Mr. Hastings, too, was a man of good family. But the Peers only find their fellow guilty of manslaughter. He claims his privilege, and is dismissed with a benevolent admonition not to do it again. Elsewhere, we have Lord Cornwallis and a friend coming out of Whitehall in the early morning, drunk and using the foulest language. After trying in vain to quarrel with a sentinel, they swear that they will kill somebody before going home. An unlucky youth comes home to his lodgings close by, and after some abuse from the Peer and his friend, the lad is somehow tumbled downstairs and killed on the spot. As it seems not to be clear whether Lord Cornwallis gave the fatal kick, he is honourably acquitted. Then we have a free fight at a tavern, where Lord Pembroke is drinking with a lot of friends. One of them says that he is as good a gentleman as Lord Pembroke. The witnesses were all too drunk to remember how and why anything happened; but after a time one of them is kicked out of the tavern; another, a Mr. Cony, is knocked down and trampled, and swears that he has received what turned out some days later to be mortal injuries from the boots of Lord Pembroke. The case is, indeed, doubtful; for the doctor who was called in refused to make a post-mortem examination on the ground that it might lead him into "a troublesome matter;" and another was disposed to attribute the death to poor Mr. Cony's inordinate love of "cold small beer." He drank three whole tankards the night before his death; and when actually dying, declined "white wine posset drink," suggested by the doctor, and "swore a great oath he would have small beer." And so he died, whether by boots or beer; and the Lord High Steward in due time had to inform Lord Pembroke that his lordship was guilty of manslaughter, but, being entitled to his clergy, was to be discharged on paying his fees. The most sinister figure amongst these wild gallants is the Lord Mohun, who killed, and was killed by, the Duke of Hamilton, as all the readers of the Journals of Swift or of Colonel Esmond remember. He appears twice in the collection. On December 9, 1690, Mohun and his friend Colonel Hill come swaggering into the play-house, and got from the pit upon the stage. An attendant asks them to pay for their places; whereupon Lord Mohun nobly refuses, saying, "If you bring any of your masters I will slit their noses." The pair have a coach-and-six waiting in the street to carry off Mrs. Bracegirdle, to whom Hill has been making love. As she is going home to supper, they try to force her into it with the help of half-a-dozen soldiers. The by-standers prevent this; but the pair insist upon seeing Mrs. Bracegirdle to her house, and mount guard outside with their swords drawn. Mrs. Bracegirdle and her friends stand listening at the door, and hear them vowing vengeance against Mountford, of whom Hill was jealous. Presently the watch appears—the constable and the beadle, and a man in front with a lantern. The constable asks

why are the swords drawn. Mrs. Bracegirdle through the door hears Mohun reply, "I am a Peer of England, touch me if you dare." "God bless your honour," replies the constable, "I know not what you are, but I hope you are doing no harm." "No," said he. "You may knock me down, if you please," adds Colonel Hill. "Nay, said I" (the lantern-bearer), "we never use to knock gentlemen down unless there be occasion." And the judicious watch retire to a tavern in the next street, in order, as they say, "to examine what they (Mohun and Hill) were, and what they were doing." There was, as the constable explains, "a drawer there, who had formerly lived over against him," and might throw some light upon the proceedings of these polite gentlemen. But, alas! "in the meantime the murder was done." For as another witness tells us, Mr. Mountford came up the street and was speaking coolly to Mohun, when Hill came up behind and gave him a box on the ear. "Saith Mr. Mountford, what's that for? And with that he (Hill) whipped out his sword and made a pass at him, and I turned about and cried murder!" Mountford was instantly killed; but witnesses peeping through doors, and looking out of windows, gave conflicting accounts of the scuffle in the dim street, and Lord Mohun, after much argument as to the law, was acquitted. Five years later, he appears in the case reported by Esmond, with little more than a change in the names. An insensate tavern-brawl is followed by an adjournment to Leicester Fields; six noblemen and gentlemen in chairs; Mr. Coote, the chief actor in the quarrel, urging his chairman by threatening to goad him with his sword. The gentlemen get over the railings and vanish into the "dark wet" night, whilst the chairmen philosophically light their pipes. The pipes are scarcely alight, when there is a cry for help. Somehow a chair is hoisted over the rails, and poor Mr. Coote is found prostrate in a pool of blood. The chairmen strongly object to spoiling their chairs by putting a "bloody man" into them. They are pacified by a promise of 100*l.* security; but the chair is somehow broken, and the watch will not come to help, because it is out of their ward; "and I staid half-an-hour," says the chief witness pathetically, "with my chair broken, and afterwards I was laid hold upon, both I and my partner, and kept till next night at eleven o'clock; and that is all the satisfaction I have had for my chair and everything." This damage to the chair was clearly the chief point of interest for poor Robert Browne, the chairman, and it may be feared that his account is still unsettled. Mohun escaped upon this occasion, and, indeed, Esmond is unjust in giving to him a principal part in the tragedy.

Such were the sights to be seen occasionally in London by the watchman's lantern, or the candle glimmering across the narrow ally, or some occasional lamp swinging across the street; for it was by such a lamp that a girl looked into the hackney-coach and saw the face of the man who had sent for Dr. Clench ostensibly to visit a patient, but really in order to strangle the poor doctor on the way. They are strange illu-

minations on the margin of the pompous page of official history ; and the incidental details give form and colour to the incidents in Pepys' *Journals* or Grammont's *Memoirs*. We have kept at a distance from the more dignified records of the famous constitutional struggles which fill the greatest number of pages. Yet those pages are not barren for the lover of the picturesque. And here I must put in a word for one much reviled character. If ever I were to try my hand at the historical amusement of whitewashing, I should be tempted to take for my hero the infamous Jeffreys. He was, I dare say, as bad as he is painted ; so perhaps were Nero and Richard III., and other much abused persons ; but no miscreant of them all could be more amusing. Wherever the name of Jeffreys appears we may be certain of good sport. With all his inexpressible brutality, his buffoonery, his baseness, we can see that he was a man of remarkable talent. We think of him generally as he appeared when bullying Baxter ; when "he snorted and squeaked, blew his nose and clenched his hands, and lifted up his eyes, mimicking their (the Nonconformists') manner, and running on furiously, as he said they used to pray ;" and we may regard him as his victims must have regarded him, as a kind of demoniacal baboon placed on the bench in robes and wig, in hideous caricature of justice. But the vigour and skill of the man when he has to worry the truth out of a stubborn witness, is also amazing. When a knavish witness produced a forged deed in support of the claim of a certain Lady Ity to a great part of Shadwell, Jeffreys is in his element. He is perhaps a little too exuberant. "Ask him what questions you will," he breaks out, "but if he should swear as long as Sir John Falstaff fought" (the Chief Justice can quote Shakspeare), "I would never believe a word he says." His lordship may be too violent, but he is substantially doing justice ; and shows himself a dead hand at unmasking a cheat. The most striking proof of Jeffreys' power is in the dramatic trial of Lady Lisle. The poor lady was accused of harbouring one Hicks, a Dissenting preacher, after Sedgemoor. It was clear that a certain James Dunne had guided Hicks to Lady Lisle's house. The difficulty was to prove that Lady Lisle knew Hicks to be a traitor. Dunne had talked to her in presence of another witness, and it was suggested that he had given her the fatal information. But Dunne tried hard in telling his story to sink this vital fact. The effort of Jeffreys to twist it out of poor Dunne, and Dunne's futile and prolonged wriggling to escape the confession, are reported at full, and form one of the most striking passages in the State Trials. Jeffreys shouts at him ; dilates in most edifying terms upon the bottomless lake of fire and brimstone which awaits all perjurers ; snatches at any slip ; pins the witness down ; fastens inconsistencies upon him through page after page ; but poor Dunne desperately clutches the secret in spite of the tremendous strain. He almost seems to have escaped, when the other witness establishes the fact that some conversation took place. Armed with this new thumbscrew, Jeffreys leaps upon poor

Dunne again. The storm of objurgations, appeals, confutations, bursts forth with increased force; poor Dunne slips into a fatal admission: he has admitted some talk, but cannot explain what it was. He tries dogged silence. The torture of Jeffreys' tongue urges him to fresh blundering. A candle is held up to his nose that the court "may see his brazen face." At last he exclaims, the candle "still nearer to his nose," and feeling himself the very focus of all attention, "I am quite cluttered out of my senses; I do not know what I say." The wretched creature is allowed to reflect for a time, and then at last declares that he will tell the truth. He tells enough in fact for the purpose, though he feebly tries to keep back the most damning words. Enough has been wrrenched out of him to send poor Lady Lisle to the scaffold. The figure of the poor old lady falling asleep, as it is said, while Jeffreys' thunder and lightning was raging in this terrific fashion round the feeble defence of Dunne's reticence, is so pathetic, and her fate so piteous and disgraceful, that we have little sense for anything but Jeffreys' brutality. But if the power of worming the truth out of a grudging witness were the sole test of a judge's excellence, we must admit the amazing efficiency of Jeffreys' method. He is the ideal cross-examiner, and we may overlook the cruelty to victims who have so long ceased to suffer.

In the post-revolutionary period the world becomes more merciful and duller. Lawyers speak at greater length; and even the victims of '45, the strange Lord Lovat himself, give little sport at the respectable bar of the House of Lords. But the domestic trials become perhaps more interesting, if only by way of commentary upon *Tom Jones* or *Roderick Random*. Novelists indeed have occasionally sought to turn these records to account. The great Annesley case has been used by Mr. Charles Reade, and Scott took some hints from it in one of the very best of his performances, the inimitable *Guy Mannering*. Scott's adaptation should, indeed, be rather a warning than a precedent; for the surpassing merit of his great novel consists in the display of character, in Meg Merrilies and Dandie Dinmont and Counsellor Pleydell, and certainly not in the rather childish plot with the long-lost heir business. He falls into the common error of supposing that the actual occurrence of events must be a sufficient guarantee for employing them in fiction. The Annesley case is almost the only one in the collection in which facts descend to the level of romance. The claimant's case was clearly established up to a certain point. There was no doubt that he had passed for Lord Annesley's son in his childhood; that he had for that reason been spirited away by his uncle, and sold as a slave in America; and, further, that when he returned to make his claim and killed a man by accident (an incident used by Scott)—that his uncle did his best to have him convicted for murder. The more difficult point was to prove that he was the legitimate son of the deceased lord by his wife, who was also dead. A servant of the supposed mother gave evidence which, if true, conclusively disproved this assumption; and though young Annesley won his first

trial, he afterwards failed to convict this witness of perjury. The case may therefore be still doubtful, though the weight of evidence seems decidedly against the claimant. The case—the “longest ever known” at that time—lasted fifteen days, and gives some queer illustrations of the domestic life of a disreputable Irish nobleman of the period. Perhaps, however, the most curious piece of evidence is given by the attorney who was employed to prosecute the claimant for a murder of which he was clearly innocent. “What was the intention of the prosecution?” he is asked. “To put this man out of the way that he (Lord Anglesea, the uncle) might enjoy the estate easy and quiet.” “You understood, then, that Lord Anglesea would give 10,000*l.* to get the plaintiff hanged?” “I did.” “Did you not apprehend that to be a most wicked crime?” “I did.” “If so, how could you engage in that project, without making any objection to it?” “I may as well ask you,” is the reply, “how you came to be engaged in this suit.” He is afterwards asked whether any honest man would do such an action. “Yes, I believe they would, or else I would not have carried it on.” This is one of the prettiest instances on record of that ingenious adaptation of the conscience, which allows a man to think himself thoroughly honest for committing a most wicked crime in his professional capacity. The novelist who wishes rather to display character than to amuse us with intricacies of plot, will find more matter in less ambitious narratives. A most pathetic romance, which may remind us of more famous fictions, underlies the great murder case in which Cowper the poet’s grandfather was defendant. Sarah Stout, the daughter of a Quaker at Hertford, fell desperately in love with Cowper, who was a barrister, and sometimes lodged at her father’s house when on circuit. She wrote passionate letters to him of the *Eloïse* to *Abelard* kind, which Cowper was ultimately forced to produce in evidence. He therefore had a final interview with her, explained to her the folly of her passion, there being already a Mrs. Cowper, and left her late in the evening to go to his lodgings elsewhere. Poor Sarah Stout rushed out in despair and threw herself into the *Priory* river. There she was found dead next morning, when the miller came to pull up his sluices. All the gossips of Hertford came immediately to look at the body and make moral or judicial reflections upon the facts. *Wiseacres* suggested that Cowper was the last man seen in her company, and it came out that two or three other men attending the assizes had gossiped about her on the previous evening, and one of them had, strange to relate, left a cord close by his trunk. These facts, transfigured by the Hertford imagination, became the nucleus of a theory, set forth in delicious legal verbosity, that the said Cowper, John Masson, and others “a certain rope of no value about the neck of the said Sarah, then and there feloniously, voluntarily, and of malice aforethought did put, place, fix, and bind; and the neck and throat of the said Sarah, then and there with the hands of you, the said Cowper, Masson, Stephens, and Rogers, feloniously, voluntarily, and of your malice aforethought, did hold,

squeeze, and gripe." By the said squeezing and griping, to abbreviate a little, Sarah Stout was choked and strangled; and being choked and strangled instantly died, and was then secretly and maliciously put and cast into the river. The evidence, it is plain, required a little straining, but then Cowper belonged to the great Whig family of the town, and Sarah Stout was a Quaker. Tories thought it would be well to get a Cowper hanged, and Quakers wished to escape the imputation that one of their sect had committed suicide. The trial lasted so long that the poor judge became faint and confessed that he could not sum up properly. The whole strength of the case, however, such as it was, depended upon an ingenious theory set up by the prosecution, to the effect that the bodies of the drowned always sink, whereas Miss Stout was found floating, and must therefore have been dead before she was put in the river. The chief witness was a sailor, who swore that this doctrine as to sinking and swimming was universal in the navy. He had seen the shipwreck of the "Coronation" in 1691. "We saw the ship sink down," he says, "and they swam up and down like a shoal of fish one over another, and I see them hover one upon another, and see them drop away by scores at a time;" some nine escaped, "but there were no more saved out of the ship's complement, which was between 500 and 600, and the rest I saw sinking downright, twenty at a time." He has a clinching argument, though a less graphic instance, to prove that men already dead do not sink. "Otherwise, why should Government be at that vast charge to allow threescore or fourscore weight of iron to sink every man, but only that their swimming about should not be a discouragement to others?" Cowper's scientific witnesses, some of the medical bigwigs of the day, had very little trouble in confuting this evidence: but the letters which he at last produced, and the evidence that poor Miss Stout had been talking of suicide, should have made the whole story clear even to the bemuddled judges. The novelist would throw into the background this crowd of gossiping and malicious *quidnuncs* of Hertford; but we must be content to catch glimpses of her previous history from these absurdly irrelevant twaddlings, as in actual life we catch sight of tragedies below the surface of social small-talk. Sarah Stout was clearly a Maggie Tulliver, a potential heroine, unable to be happy amidst the broad-brimmed, drab-coated respectabilities of quiet little Hertford. Her rebellion was rasher than Maggie's, but perhaps in a more characteristic fashion. The case suggests the wish that Mr. Stephen Guest might have been hanged on some such suspicion as was nearly fatal to Cowper.

Half a century later our ancestors were in a state of intense excitement about another tragedy of a darker kind. Mary Blandy, the only daughter of a gentleman at Henley, made acquaintance with a Captain Cranstoun, who was recruiting in the town. The father objected to a marriage, from a suspicion, apparently well founded, that Cranstoun was already married in Scotland. Thereupon Mary Blandy

administered to her father certain powders sent to her by Cranstoun. According to her own account, she intended them as a kind of charm to act upon her father's affections. As they were, in fact, composed of arsenic, they soon put an end to her father altogether, and it is too clear that she really knew what she was doing. It was sworn that she used brutal and unfeeling language about the poor old man's sufferings, for the poison was given at intervals during some months. But the pathetic touch which moved the sympathies of contemporaries was the behaviour of the father. In the last day or two of his life, he was told that his daughter had been the cause of his fatal illness. His comment was: "Poor lovesick girl! What will not a woman do for the man she loves." When she came to his room his only thought was apparently to comfort her. His most reproachful phrase was: "Thee should have considered better than to have attempted anything against thy father." The daughter went down on her knees and begged him not to curse her. "I curse thee!" he exclaimed. "My dear, how couldst thou think I should curse thee? No, I bless thee, and hope God will bless thee and amend thy life." And then he added, "Do, my dear, go out of the room and say no more, lest thou shouldst say anything to thy prejudice; go to thy uncle Stevens, take him for thy friend; poor man, I am sorry for him." The tragedy behind these homely words is almost too pathetic and painful for dramatic purposes; and it is not strange that our ancestors were affected. The sympathy, however, took the queer illogical twist which perhaps, who can tell? it might do at the present day. Miss Blandy became a sort of quasi saint, the tenderness due to the murdered man extended itself to his murderer, and her penitence profoundly edified all observers. Crowds of people flocked to see her in chapel, and she accepted the homage gracefully. She was extremely shocked, we are told, by one insinuation made by uncharitable persons; namely, that her intimacy with Cranstoun, who was supposed to be a freethinker, might justify doubts upon her orthodoxy. She declared that he had always talked to her "perfectly in the style of a Christian," and she had read the works of some of our most celebrated divines. In spite of her moving conduct, however, the "prejudices she had to struggle with had taken too deep root in some men's minds" to allow of her getting a pardon. And so, 5,000 people saw poor Miss Blandy mount the ladder in "a black bombazine, short sack and petticoat," on an April morning at Oxford, and many, "particularly several gentlemen of the University," were observed to shed tears. She left a declaration of innocence which, in spite of its solemnity, must have been a lie; and which contained an allusion from which it appears that Miss Blandy, like other prisoners, was suspected of previous crimes.

"It is shocking to think," says Horace Walpole, in noticing Miss Blandy's case, "what a shambles this country has become. Seventeen were executed this morning, after having murdered the turnkey on Friday night, and almost forced open Newgate." Another woman was

hanged in the same year for murdering her uncle at Walthamstow; and the public could talk about nothing but the marriage of the Miss Gunnings and the hanging of two murderesses. Fielding, then approaching the end of his career, was moved by this and other atrocities to publish a queer collection of instances of the providential punishment of murderers. Another famous author of the day was commonly said to have turned a famous murder to account in a different fashion. Foote, it is said, was introduced at a club in the words, "This is the nephew of the gentleman who was lately hung in chains for murdering his brother;" and it is added that Foote's first pamphlet was an account of this disagreeable domestic incident. A more serious author might have found in it materials for a striking narrative. Captain Goodere commanded his Majesty's ship *Ruby*, lying in the King's Road off Bristol. He had a quarrel with his brother, Sir John Goodere, about a certain estate. The family solicitor arranged a meeting in his house, where the two brothers appeared to be reconciled. But Sir John had scarcely left the house, when he was seized in broad daylight by a set of sailors who had been drinking in a public-house, and carried down forcibly to the Captain's barge. The Captain himself followed and rowed off with his brother to the ship. There Sir John was confined in a cabin, a suggestion being thrown out to the crew that he was a madman. A few hours later, one Mahony, who played the part of "hairy-faced Dick" to Hamilton Tighe, strangled the unfortunate man, with an accomplice called White. Attention had been aroused amongst the crew by ominous sounds, groans and scufflings heard in the dead of night, and next morning, the lieutenant, after a talk with the surgeon, resolved to seize their captain for murder. A more outrageous and reckless proceeding, indeed, could scarcely have been imagined, even in the days when a press-gang was a familiar sight, and the captain of a ship at sea was as absolute as an Eastern despot. Every detail seemed to be arranged with an express view to publicity. One piece of evidence, however, was required to bring the matter home to the captain; and it is of ghastly picturesqueness. The ship's cooper and his wife were sleeping in the cabin next to the scene of the murder. The cooper had heard the poor man exclaim that he was going to be murdered, and praying that the murder might come to light. This, however, seemed to be the wandering of a madman, and the cooper went to sleep. Presently his wife called him up: "I believe they are murdering the gentleman." He heard broken words and saw a light glimmering through a crevice in the partition. Peeping through, he could distinguish the two ruffians, standing with a candle over the dead body and taking a watch from a pocket. And then, through the gloom, he made out a hand upon the throat of the victim. The owner of the hand was invisible; but it was whiter than that of a common sailor. "I have often seen Mahony's and White's hands," he added, "and I thought the hand was whiter than either of theirs." The trembling cooper wanted to leave the cabin,

but his wife held him back, as, indeed, with three murderers in the dark passage outside, it required some courage to move. So they watched trembling, till he heard a sentinel outside, and thought himself safe at last : he roused the doctor, peeped at the dead body through a "scuttle" which opened into the cabin ; and then urged the lieutenant to seize the captain. The captain was deservedly hanged, bequeathing to us that ghastly Rembrandt-like picture of the white hand seen through the crevice by the trembling cooper on the throat of the murdered man. There is no touch which appeals so forcibly to the imagination in De Quincey's famous narrative of the Mar murders.

I have made but a random selection from the long gallery of grim and grotesque portraiture of the less reputable of our ancestry. It must be confessed that a first impression tends to reconcile us to the comfortable creed of progress. The eighteenth century had some little defects which have been frequently expounded ; but it can certainly afford to show courts of justice against its predecessor. The old judicial murder of the Popish Plot variety has become extinct ; if the judges try to strain the law of libel, for example, the prisoner has every chance of making a good fight ; for which the readers of Horne Tooke's gallant defences, and of some of Erskine's speeches, may be duly grateful. The ancient brag of fair play has become something of a reality. And the character of the crimes has changed in a noticeable way. There are hideous crimes enough. A brutal murder by smugglers near the case of Mary Blandy, surpasses in its barbarity the worst of modern agrarian outrages ; though it is not clear that in number of horrors the present century is unable to match its predecessor. When the wild blood of the Byrons shows itself in the last of the old tavern brawls à la Mohun, we feel that it is a case (in modern slang) of a "survival." The poet's grand-uncle, the wicked Lord Byron, got into a quarrel with Mr. Chaworth about the game laws at a dinner of country gentlemen at the Star and Garter ; whereupon, in an ambiguous affair, half scuffle and half duel, Byron sent his sword through Chaworth's body, and then politely requested Mr. Chaworth to admit that he (Byron) was as brave a man as any in the kingdom. But this little ebullition required Byronic impulsiveness, and was not a recognised part of a gentleman's conduct. Lord Ferrers, a short time before, was hanged, to the admiration of all men, like a common felon, for shooting his own steward ; whereas in our day, he would almost certainly have escaped on the plea of insanity. Other cases mark the advent of the meddlesome, but perhaps on the whole useful person, the social reformer. Momentary gleams of light, for example, are thrown upon the scandals which ruined the trade of the parsons of the Fleet. Poor Miss Pleasant Rawlins is arrested for an imaginary debt, carried to a sponging-house, and there persuaded (she was only seventeen or thereabouts), that she could obtain her liberty by an immediate marriage to an adventurer who had scraped acquaintance with her and taken a liking to her fortune. The famous (he was

once famous) Beau Fielding falls into a trap unworthy of an experienced man of the world. He is persuaded that a lady of fortune has fallen in love with him on seeing him walking in her grounds at a distance. A lady, by no means of fortune, comes to his lodgings, and passes herself off as this susceptible person. Hereupon Fielding sends off for a priest of one of the foreign embassies, gets himself married at his lodgings the same evening, and discovers a few days afterwards that he is married to the wrong person. It is exactly a comedy of the period performed by real flesh and blood actors. The catastrophe is painful. Mr. Fielding ventures to grant himself a divorce, and to marry the wretched old Duchess of Cleveland; and in due time the Duchess finds it very convenient to have him tried for bigamy. It did not take more than half a century or so of such scandals to get an improvement in the marriage law, which implies, on the whole, a creditable rate of progress. Another set of cases illustrates a grievance familiar to novel readers. In *Amelia* the atrocities of bailiffs, sponging-houses and debtors' prisons, are drawn with startling realism. We may easily convince ourselves that Fielding was not speaking without book. The bailiff who has arrested Captain Booth gives a "wipe or two with his hanger," as he pleasantly expresses it, to an unlucky wretch who gives trouble, and delivers an admirable discourse upon the ethics of killing in such cases. It might have come from the mouth of one Tranter, a bailiff, who, a few years before, had stabbed poor Captain Luttrell, for objecting to leave his wife in a delicate state of health. Soon after, we find a society of philanthropists headed by Oglethorpe of "strong benevolence of soul," endeavouring to expose the horrors of the Fleet and the Marshalsea. A series of trials, ordered by the House of Commons, had the ending too characteristic of all such movements. Witnesses swore to atrocities enough to make one's blood run cold; of men guilty only of impecuniosity, half-starved, thrust naked into loathsome and pestiferous dungeons, beaten and chained, and persecuted to death. But then arise another set of unimpeachable witnesses, who swear with equal vigour, that the unfortunate debtors were treated with every consideration; that they were made as comfortable as their mutinous spirit would allow; that they were discharged in good health and died months afterwards from entirely different causes; that the accused were not the responsible authorities; that they had never interfered except from kindness, and that they were the humanest and best of mankind. Nothing remained but an acquittal; though the investigation did something towards letting daylight into abodes of horror which Mr. Pickwick found capable of improvement a century later.

Other cases might show how in various ways the strange power called Public Opinion was beginning to increase its capricious and desultory influence. The strange case of Elizabeth Canning (1753) is one of the most picturesque in the collection. Miss Canning was a maid-servant, who disappeared for a month, and coming home told a story of kidnapping by a gipsy. Officious neighbours rushed in, and by judicious

leading questions managed to help her to manufacture evidence against a poor old gipsy woman, preternaturally hideous, who sits smoking her pipe in blank wonder as the crowd of virtuous avengers of innocence rush into her kitchen. Mary Squires, the gipsy, was sentenced to be hanged, and doubtless at an earlier period she would have been turned off without delay. But in that delicious calm in the middle of the last century, when wars, and rebellions, and constitutional agitations were quiet for the moment, and people had time to read their modest newspapers without spoiling their digestions and their nerves, the case came to absorb the popular interest. If the news did not flash through the country as rapidly as that of the Lefroy murder, it slowly dribbled along the post-roads and set people gossiping in alehouses far away in quiet country villages. A whole host of witnesses appeared and put together a diary of a gipsy's tour. We follow the party to village dances; we hear the venerable piece of scandal about the schoolmaster who "got fuddled" with the gipsies; and what the gipsies had for dinner on January 1, 1753, and how they paid their bill; we have a glimpse of the little flirtation carried on by the gipsy's daughter, and the poor trembling little letter is produced, which she managed to write to her lover, and which cost her sevenpence: threepence being charged for it from Basingstoke to London, and fourpence from London to Dorchester. After more than a week spent in overhauling this and other evidence, proving amongst other things that the scene of the girl's supposed confinement was really tenanted the whole time by a man strangely and most inappropriately named Fortune Natus, the jury decided that the accuser was guilty of perjury, but boggled characteristically as to its being "wilful and corrupt." However, Elizabeth Canning got her deserts, and was transported to New England, still sticking to the truth of her story. Her guilt is plain enough, if anybody could care about it, but the little details of English country life a century ago are as fresh as the doings of the rustics in one of Mr. Hardy's novels.

It all happened a long time ago, but we cannot hope with the old lady who made that consolatory remark about other historical narratives that "it ain't none of it true." On the contrary such vivid little pictures flash out upon us as we read that we have a difficulty in supposing that they were not taken yesterday. Abundance of morals may be drawn by historians and others who deal in that kind of ware; it is enough here to have indicated as well as we can, what pleasant reading may be found in the dusty old volumes which are too often left to repose undisturbed on the repulsive shelves of a lawyer's library.

A Port of the Past.

THERE is only one thing in the world more wonderful than Rome, and that is the neighbourhood of Rome. Yet of the myriads of tourists who annually pass through the Eternal City, how few are there who condescend to do more than take one or two desultory drives in the Campagna ! Perhaps they get as far as the tomb of Cecilia Metella on the Via Appia. Possibly they drive out to Sant' Agnese on the Nomentan Way. If very enterprising, conceivably they take the tram to Frascati, or the railway to Albano. But of the scores of places of absorbing historical and antiquarian interest within a twenty miles' radius of the Seven Hills they know and care nothing. In this respect modern travellers have greatly changed for the worse as compared with their forerunners. They cover a vast amount of space with their locomotives and their hired carriages ; but they keep to the more beaten tracks, and they skim a country almost with the swiftness of swallows. Like gold nuggets, human intelligence and human curiosity can either be beaten out very thin, and so be made to cover a considerable superficial area, or they may be compressed and concentrated till their depth is equal to their breadth. The spreading-out process seems to be the one most in vogue in these days. People prefer to make a superficial journey round the world in a given number of days, rather than to devote an ungiven number of days to the world's most precious and sacred localities. One place is treated exactly like another. Florence occupies no more of the tourist's time than Vienna ; and Rome is supposed to be seen in the same number of hours that are required for Berlin. In olden days, fewer people, far fewer people, visited Rome ; but those who visited it did so with intelligent interest and to some useful purpose. They remained for months at a time in a city which is not to be thoroughly explored in less ; and to their acquaintance with intramural Rome they added some familiarity with the numerous suburbs that lie between Rome and the sea, or between Rome and the mountains.

One of the most delightful excursions to be made in the neighbourhood of Rome, and one which best repays the expense of the journey, is a day's trip by carriage to Ostia and Castel Fusano. The time was when a carriage that held four persons could be hired for this purpose for five scudi, or little more than a sovereign. But last spring nearly twice that sum was demanded for the cost of the expedition. The temporal power of the Popes has disappeared ; Rome boasts a Parliament, a free press, and many new thoroughfares ; and these are luxuries which invariably bring costly living in their train. Even in the middle of March, when you

are going to undertake a journey of this kind—only fifteen miles out and fifteen back—a Roman coachman is anxious to be off betimes; and if you know what a Roman sun can do long before noon, even at the Vernal Equinox, you will second his humour, and be settling into your seat not long after 8 A.M. strikes. People are not taking down shutters in Rome at that hour, as in Oxford Street or Piccadilly. All the world is up and about; the streets are thronged; the markets are crowded; and a fair amount of the day's work has already been done. How charming it is at that hour to wind through the streets that lead to the Forum, where all modern improvements despite, the buffaloes are still lying down in the shafts of the two-wheeled country carts that are stacked with fodder for the use of the Capital. You can see at a glance that Rome is still far from being an opulent city; that the old ways of primitive poverty, as shown in garb, in victual, in harness-gear, in every turn and detail of life, still subsist; and as you pass out of the Porta San Paolo, and get upon the Ostian Way, you can hardly believe that you are in the neighbourhood of a great Capital. It is not that the Campagna is as yet about you, or that signs of moral cultivation do not abound. But there is a ruggedness, a carelessness, a don't-mind air about everything, that is more than provincial in character. The only houses are roadside *Osterie*, or inns, their walls decorated with flaming frescoes or trellis decoration of the rudest sort, intimating that a good rest and *vino nostrale* are, on the whole, the best things in this world. The Roman peasant, and indeed the Roman citizen of a certain class, readily believes this otiose philosophy; and the amount of drinking and reposing that is got through in these suburban gardens is amazing. For gardens they all of them possess; and when summer comes, there will be a *pergola* of vine leaves, and under the grapes of this year the stalwart *contadini* and handsome *Trasteverine* matrons will quaff the juice of the grapes of last. They are true descendants of Horace. They love their Falernian or their Massic; they gather rosebuds when they may; and they take as little heed of the morrow as possible. Yet they are amiable and graceful in their cups unless the demon of jealousy lurks at the bottom of the draught; and then their bouts are terrible.

By degrees, however, these wayside inns become more and more sparse, and finally vanish altogether. You have passed the great Basilica of St. Paul, so tame and poor externally, so splendid and gorgeous within, with its attendant Convent, stricken with annual malaria, and you find yourself following the course of the truly yellow Tiber, through scrub, through rough pasture, and past little low hills scarce deserving of the name. It is the horizon rather than the foreground that now attracts your eye; and you note where, far away to the left, lies Frascati, further still, Tivoli. There is little traffic along the road, though it leads to the most famous port of Ancient Rome and to where the Tiber still debouches. Sheep grazing, lambs frisking, shepherds in goat-skin garments leaning upon their crooks, troops of

young colts, shaggy, spare, and easily startled, are the main objects and incidents of your progress. Now and again there is a green thicket and a deep-banked stream, and now you catch sight of the sea. What is that? That is Ostia? Which? That round Tower, with some farm buildings clustered round it? Precisely. That is all which represents the greatest port of the most celebrated city in the world. Listen to the description of what it once was. The historian is describing one of the feats of Alaric. "Instead of assaulting the Capital, he successively directed his efforts against the Port of Ostia, one of the boldest and most stupendous works of Roman magnificence. The accidents to which the precarious subsistence of the city was continually exposed in a winter navigation and an open road, had suggested to the genius of the first Cæsar the useful design, which was executed under the reign of Claudius. The artificial moles, which formed the narrow entrance, advanced far into the sea, and firmly repelled the fury of the waves; while the largest vessels securely rode at anchor within three deep and capacious basins, which received the northern branch of the Tiber, about two miles from the ancient colony of Ostia. The Roman Port insensibly swelled to the size of an Episcopal City, where the corn of Africa was deposited in spacious granaries for the use of the Capital." The rest may be easily surmised. As soon as Alaric got possession of Ostia he menaced Rome with the destruction of these granaries unless the Capital was instantly surrendered into his hands; and the clamours of the people, and the terror of famine, subdued the pride of the Senate. It would be impossible to terrify Rome to-day by threats directed against Ostia. An invader might flog the waves like Xerxes, or sack the barren sands; but his power of mischief would end with those bootless exploits.

Ostia never recovered from that famous assault in the fifth century, and till A.D. 830 it remained to all intents and purposes deserted, the sea-sand continually silting up and adding future uselessness to past ravages. Then Gregory IV. founded another Ostia, about a mile distant from the site of the original city; and it is at what is left of this second Ostia that your coachman will descend, take out his horses, and show every intention of having nothing more to say to you till you think proper to turn your face Romewards again. It is some distance hence to the Roman Ostia, some distance again in another direction to the woods of Castel Fusano; but the day is young, and one wants to walk and to have as little company as possible while prowling among ruins and excavations. A malaria-stricken peasant emerges from a massive stone doorway, and helps to stable the horses. A priest, dirty and unshaven, is amusing himself by feeding with coarse oatmeal the litter of a wild boar, which he has tamed to be his companion in this solitary place. The old sow, in spite of her fierce appearance and shaggy bristles, is very friendly; and but for his cassock the padre would look far more like a professional swineherd than a servant of the Altar. Once upon a time the Bishopric of Ostia was the most famous in the world. Pious tra-

dition has always maintained that it was established in the time of the Apostles; though I fear that erudite sceptics would claim for it no earlier origin than the Pontificate of Urban I., about 229 A.D. This privilege, however, it undoubtedly had, that when the Pope elect happened to be in priest's orders he was enthroned by the Bishop of Ostia, who was regarded as the Dean of the Sacred College, and must therefore have had the dignity of Cardinal by virtue of his office. Apparently this smiling, grimy ecclesiastic is all that is left of the Ostian bishopric, which is now merged in that of Velletri. We ask him if he will show us his church. With all the pleasure in the world, for it gives him something to do; but it evidently surprises him that anybody should wish to see it. Truly, it is unremarkable and, to the eye, devoid of interest. But look at that fresco in the side chapel on the right. It represents the death and apotheosis of Santa Monica. And then you remember that it was here, at Ostia, that St. Augustine, on his way to Africa, had to bid adieu to his saintly mother. The records of history contain no tenderer chapter than the relations of Monica with her ardent, erratic, and finally repentant, immortal son. Who does not remember Ary Scheffer's picture of the pair gazing out to sea together! So did they at Ostia before Monica died. And here, at Ostia, Augustine buried her, lingering awhile to write his treatise *De Libero Arbitrio*, and then sailed for the African see with which his name is for ever associated. Not content with trying to revive the existence of Ostia, Gregory IV. surrounded it with walls, and the sycophants of the time tried to christen it Gregoriopolis, but the name Ostia could not be got rid of. Under Leo IV. the Saracens swooped down upon it and got that picturesque thrashing which Raphael has commemorated in the *Stanze* of the Vatican. That event must have administered a fillip to the place, for it was important enough to be besieged and captured by the King of Naples in 1413. Then the famous Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, better known as Julius II., took a fancy to it, and employed Sangallo to build, and Baldassare Peruzzi to decorate. The decorations have gone the way of all such; but the massive circular Tower, surrounded by bastions connected by a curtain and defended by a ditch, still remains. Everywhere where they can be put are the arms of the Della Rovere—an evergreen oak, the *robur* of the Italian poets. The cardinal gallantly defended his tower against the French for two whole years, and finally drove them off. After that, new Ostia languished; and now nothing survives but this same Tower, a small church, and a farmyard with the litter of a wild boar. Inside the tower are staircases, vaults, mutilated statues, undecipherable inscriptions, votive altars, funeral tablets, broken utensils of bronze, pottery, and glass, the *disjecta membra* of a vanished civilisation. I am told the population of the *paese*, or neighbourhood, is sometimes as high as one hundred souls, though in the season of malaria it sinks below this figure. I can only speak of it as I found it, and I saw only one priest and one peasant. To make the population larger I must count the wild sow's litter.

And now, with your face seawards, you may walk through sandy drives to the site of ancient Ostia. Of late years, the excavations begun in the time of Cosmo de' Medici, under the direction of Poggio Bracciolini, and then for many a generation suspended till the present century, have been pushed on diligently. Cosmo found what folks there were upon the spot, occupied in reducing an entire temple back again into lime; and doubtless that was the chief industry of the place for many centuries. Is there much to see? Well, yes, and no. No, if you expect to find a huge city disinterred—a Herculaneum or a Pompeii. But yes, if you are satisfied with a street or two, part of a theatre, portions of a temple, and many a roadway with the marks of the chariot-wheels of senator, consul, and augur cut into them. There is enough, if you are learned, to embarrass your erudition; there is more than enough, if you be sensitive, to flood your feelings. You may say that this temple was dedicated to Jupiter; or, if you like, you may safely contradict anybody who affirms as much. It is still a fine brick structure. The *cella* is entire; much of the floor, which is of African marble, is there to testify to you. The altar of the Divinity still stands. But where are the worshippers? Here they come, down that winding grass-grown street of tombs. First, an old crone, I should think as old as Ostia itself, her face not only withered parchment, but a very palimpsest upon which many a generation has inscribed its obscure meaning. She has the comely square towel upon her head; the hard, unyielding bodice round her waist; the short, gay petticoat; and the *ciocce* or sheepskin sandals round her feet and legs, which otherwise are encased in stoutly knitted blue stockings. She is fingering her rosary, for it is Sunday, and she totters along, the genius of the place. Second, a young girl, dressed in precisely the same garb, but somehow making it look quite different. She stands erect like a goddess, and her gaze is that of the ox-eyed Juno. She has no rosary, no anything. She is a splendid mass of colours, a splendid embodiment of form, and she is an ignorant pagan who hopes the Madonna will send her a lover. Third, a lamb, decked with bright ribands, and following for company's sake, as for company's sake it has been adopted. Beyond these, deeply-worn slabs, draped statues without heads, prone and splintered columns, acanthus leaves, heaps of chipped marble, and the undying associations of the mightiest empire man has ever built or seen. Antiquarians would prattle to you by the hour about Ancus Martius, who, if you please, founded Ostia; about Claudius, Procopius, Hadrian, Septimius Severus, and Aurelian. I think such lore goes in at one ear and out at the other, when there is so little visible and tangible to impress it on the memory. One of the strangest relics of the place is an oblong room with an apse at the end of it, in the middle of which is a sacrificial altar with Mithraic reliefs. Statues of priests of Mithra were likewise found upon the spot. In the front part of the altar you may plainly see the circular depression that received the blood of the victims sacrificed. There is, too, an inscription recording that Caius Caelius,

antistes hujus loci, erected it *de sua pecuniâ*, or at his own expense. Obviously, then, there was here a Temple of Mithra. Many charming statues have been found hereabouts: the bust of the young Augustus, the Ganymede of Phædimius, and excellent bas-reliefs of Diana and Endymion. The early Christians, too, have left visible traces of themselves, of their creed, of their martyrdom, and of their special modes of interment; and there is one headless statue, much steeped in fading colour, of which the toe is worn away with constant kissing, as is that of St. Peter in the Vatican Basilica, known to all men and tourists. But nothing has availed to save Ostia; neither emperor nor cardinal, neither pope nor martyr, neither Jove, Mithra, nor Augustine. 1

From the summit of the excavated ruins of ancient Ostia, or, still better, from the top of the *Torre Boacciano*, a trifle nearer to the sea, you command a splendid view of that branch of the Tiber by which Virgil makes Æneas and his companions enter Latium. Hither it was that, as the poet describes, propitious Neptune directed their ships. Here was it that the cakes of bread were spread under a shady tree; that the wandering Trojans ate their trenchers, as provender was running short, and thereby reminded Æneas of a prediction of Anchises, which convinced him that he had "touched land" at last. It was from this very spot that the embassy set out to the Court of King Latinus at Laurentum, only a few miles away, received as gifts the three hundred horses, and took back to Æneas the message concerning Lavinia. The woods described by Virgil have gone; but it is as true to-day as then, that the Tiber, dimpled with whirlpools, and driving the sand along, "rolls his yellow billows to the sea." True now, as then, that the seabirds "*æthera mulcebant cantu*," were softening the air with their song. How is it possible, with such tender phrases as these abounding in Virgil, that critics can pretend it was left to modern poets to divine the subtlety of Nature? No doubt Dryden renders this lovely phrase, "to tuneful songs their narrow throats applied;" but we may depend upon it that this horrible parody would have revolted Virgil as much as it does ourselves. What a fascination Virgil still sheds around all this Latin coast! "*Nunc magnum manet Ardea nomen*," he wrote, hundreds of years ago, of the Argive capital of Turnus; and *magnum nomen* is all that can now be predicted of Laurentum, of Lavinium, of Antium, of Alba Longa. But the names will always remain great, because of the author of the *Æneid*. It was from this same mouth of the Tiber that Claudius sailed for Britain. We know that Claudius lived, and we are all considerably interested in the island he subdued. But who can bring himself to associate Ostia with either or both, in the same sense in which he does so with the mythical landing of Æneas and his followers? Claudius has fared but ill at the hands of historians, and poets have troubled themselves about him not at all. Why does Gibbon speak of him as "the most stupid of Roman Emperors?" But if neglected by the bard, and stigmatised by the chronicler, Claudius, after the Expedition he

organised from here, evidently had his flatterers. There was an Arch of Claudius in Rome, in the Piazza Sciarra, which Andrea Fulvio tells us existed even down to his time. In 1565, excavations were made in its neighbourhood, and many sculptured marbles were disinterred; among them, a head of Claudius, and a relief, in which he is represented as addressing his troops. It is still to be seen in the Villa Borghese. In a garden wall, behind the Barberini Palace, is a complacent inscription to Claudius, "*Quod Reges Britannos absque ullâ jacturâ domuerit, gentes Barbaras primus judicio subegerit.*" But these haughty imperial boasts are all in vain; and the "*æthera mulcebant cantu*" moves us infinitely more.

To the pine-woods of Castel Fusano is a smartish little walk, in the heat of the March sun, which is now high in the heavens. But under their dense canopy of shade, upon turf growing a harvest of asphodels, you may spread your table-cloth, set out your luncheon, uncork your Montepulciano, eat your oranges, and be very happy. What is it that smells so sweet? It is the rosemary you are lying on, for the forest is full of it. There is a Casino or villa belonging to Prince Chigi, which is inhabited only for a few weeks in the spring. Why not for more? They say the malaria strikes no one, at a certain height above the ground. Then why not make yourself a hammock in the topmost boughs of those lofty murmuring pines? Better couch, better cradle, no man could have; and from your eyrie you would descry the winding of the Tiber, the Tyrrhene main, and Rome itself. The word reminds you that you must sleep there to-night; for it is a conventional world, and men no longer couch in trees. If you did, where would you find your breakfast? Like the followers of Æneas, you would have to eat your trenchers; and I much doubt if any Lavinia would be in store for you, or any Latin king send you horses and provender. Back to Rome! It would always be worth while to go fifteen miles from Rome, if only for the sake of the pleasure of driving back to it. Its majesty never ends nor palls; and nothing can stale its infinite variety. Etruscan civilisation, Roman civilisation, Greek civilisation, the early Christian, the mediæval, the Papal, the strictly modern, all are there. Rome is the compendium of History; and you may open the human story at what page you will.

The World's End.

"Great talk among people how some of the Fanatiques do say that the end of the world is at hand, and that next Tuesday" (Dec. 2, 1662), "is to be the day."—*Pepys' Diary.*

IN the year 1000 A.D. it was almost the universal opinion that the world approached its end. Early Mother Shiptons had indicated that as the fateful year. Satan had been chained for a thousand years, and was to be loosened when the thousand years were complete. The end of the world was to be brought about by him indirectly, for his temporary triumph was to lead to the second coming of Christ, the Day of Judgment, and the end of all things terrestrial. The anticipation of these events caused natural phenomena, such as are occurring all the time, to assume a more than usually portentous aspect. Just as last year, when, according to the Shipton prophecy, our world was to come to an end, everyone who believed in the prophecy found in the weather reports from different parts of the earth proof positive, or at least confirmation strong, of the threatened end—men's hearts failing them for fear because of earthquakes, storms, and so forth, which ordinarily pass without attracting special attention; so in the year 1000, every meteorological and celestial phenomenon was anxiously watched as the possible precursor of the coming catastrophe. A comet appeared and was visible for nine days, and everyone began to ask (like Fanny Squeers), "Is this the end?" A wonderful meteor was seen, and men's frightened fancies enabled them to see what men of science seldom have the opportunity of observing now during meteoric displays. "The heavens opened," we are told, "and a kind of flaming torch fell upon the earth, leaving behind a long track of light like the path of a flash of lightning. Its brightness was so great that it frightened not only those who were in the fields, but even those who were in the houses. As this opening in the sky slowly closed, men saw with horror the figure of a dragon, whose feet were blue, and whose head seemed to grow larger and larger." A terrible picture accompanies this description. There is the meteor track, with various coruscations and widenings, so arranged as to correspond with the figure of a dragon assigned to the portentous object; but as the resemblance might not seem absolutely convincing to unimaginative persons, a dragon to match is set beside the celestial apparition, and this creature is labelled for the benefit of the inexperienced, "*Serpens cum ceruleis pedibus.*"

It is exceedingly probable that if general literature had reached as

widely then as it does now, the fears entertained in the year 1000 would have surpassed in intensity those which have been engendered since that time by successive predictions of the world's approaching end. But the great bulk of the population here and elsewhere probably heard very little of these terrible forewarnings. They had many other things to attend to in those "good old times," and some of their surroundings might very likely have suggested that they could not be much worse off if the world should actually perish at that time. As for their betters, they also were pretty busily engaged plundering each other and fighting with such zeal that manifestly for a considerable number the end was likely to come at least as soon as the general destruction threatened by the prophets. At any rate, though we have clear evidence that many believed in the predicted end of the world (indeed it was thought very wicked to be in doubt about it), matters went on much as usual; the year 1001 began and still the world endured, with every sign of continuing.

The belief that the world would come to an end in the year 1000 was associated with, if not absolutely derived from, a much older belief entertained by the earliest astronomers of whom any records remain to us. They considered that certain cyclic periods of the planetary motions begin and end with terrestrial calamities, these calamities being of different characters according to the zodiacal relations of the planetary conjunctions. Thus the ancient Chaldeans taught (according to Diodorus Siculus) that when all the planets are conjoined in Capricornus the earth is destroyed by flood; when they are all conjoined in Cancer the earth is destroyed by fire. But after each such end comes the beginning of a new cycle, at which time all things are created afresh. A favourite doctrine respecting these cyclic destructions was that the period intervening between each was the *Annus Magnus*, or great year, required for the return of the then known planets to the position (of conjunction) which they were understood to have had at the beginning of the great year. According to some this period lasted 360,000 years; others assigned to it 300,000 years, while according to Orpheus it lasted only 120,000 years. But it was in every case a multiple of a thousand years, and the subordinate catastrophes were supposed to divide the great year into sets of so many thousand years.

In Plato's *Timæus* we have some account of the Egyptian ideas concerning these successive world-endings, though minor catastrophes only are referred to; but when Solon described to the Egyptian priests Deucalion's flood, and counted for them the generations which had elapsed since it occurred, an aged priest said to him: "Like the rest of mankind the Greek nation has suffered from natural convulsions, which occur from time to time according to the position of the heavenly bodies, when parts of the earth are destroyed by the two great agents, fire and water. At certain periods portions of the human race perish in the waters, and rude survivors too often fail to transmit historical evidence of the event.

You Greeks remember one record only. There have been many. You do not even know at present anything of that fairest and noblest race of which you are a seed or remnant." The aged priest then read from Egyptian annals the records of events which had happened in Greece 9,000 years before; he described the founding of the city of Sais 8,000 years before; and this account, registered in their ancient and sacred records, Solon read at leisure. The most remarkable of the earth's cataclysms were there described, including the destruction by flood of the great island of Atlantis. This was described as a continent opposite the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar), larger in extent than Lybia and Asia together (!), and was on the road to other islands, and to a great continent of which the whole of the Mediterranean Sea was then but the harbour. Within the Pillars the empire of Atlantis reached to Egypt and Tyrrhenia. In remote times this mighty power was arrayed against Egypt and Hellas, and all those countries which bordered on the Mediterranean. Greece bravely repelled the invaders and freed all nations within the Pillars. Some time after, there was a great earthquake, and the warrior races of Hellas were drowned—the great island of Atlantis also disappeared, being submerged beneath the sea.

The conflagrations and deluges by which portions of the earth, and at times the whole earth, were destroyed, were believed to be intended for the regeneration of the world. After each catastrophe, men were created afresh free from vice and misery; but gradually they fell away from this happy state to a condition of immorality, which rendered a new decree of destruction necessary.

Lyell notes that the sect of Stoics adopted most fully the system of catastrophes thus designed for the alternate destruction and regeneration of the world. They taught that they were of two kinds—"the cataclysm, or destruction by water, which sweeps away the whole human race, and annihilates all the animal and vegetable productions of nature; and the epyrosis, or destruction by fire, which dissolves the globe itself. From the Egyptians also they derived the doctrine of the gradual debasement of man from a state of innocence. Towards the termination of each era the gods could no longer bear the wickedness of men, and a shock of the elements, or a deluge, overwhelmed them; after which calamity *Astræa* again descended on the earth, to renew the golden age."

That the partial destructions of the earth, whether by flood or fire, were associated with the movements of the heavenly bodies is evident from the fact that, wherever we meet with these ideas, whether in Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian, or Chinese records, direct reference is always made to the conjunction of the planets, the position of the sun and moon, and occasionally to the apparition of comets and the fall of meteoric bodies. The following account of the Chinese Flood, attributed to the reign of Yu, is traced in the order of Hangshan, a mountain on which for many ages annual sacrifices were made by the ancient emperors of China. "The great and little islets and inhabited places," says the venerable emperor of the

house of Hia, "even to their summits, the abodes of the beasts and birds and all beings, are widely inundated. I repose on the top of the mountain Yohlu. By prudence and labours I have communicated with spirits. I know not the hours, but repose myself only amid incessant labours. By the dark influence of sun and moon the mountains Hwa, Yoh, Tai, and Hang alone remain above the waters. Upon them has been the beginning and end of my enterprise. When my labours were completed I offered a thanksgiving sacrifice at the solstice. My affliction has ceased; the confusion in nature has disappeared; the deep currents coming from the south flow into the sea. The flood began at equinox. The skies rained meteoric showers of iron of extraordinary duration." Some portions of the country remained under water several years until B.C. 2233, when canals ordered to be cut by the Emperor Ta Yu conveyed to the sea the immense bodies of water which had been precipitated upon and overflowed so large a part of China. By this means river beds were finally cut, shedding water in new directions, and continued to be worn deeper by the receding flow, until the whole country was tolerably free from inundation.

Sir Charles Lyell remarks of this flood that it rather interrupted the work of agriculture than involved any widespread destruction of the human race. Mr. Davis, who accompanied two British embassies to China, points out that "even now a great derangement of the waters of the Yellow River might cause the flood of Yaou to be repeated, and lay the most fertile and populous plains of China under water." It is noteworthy, however, that in the ancient records the action of the sun and moon, presumably in raising tides, is mentioned, while meteoric showers are distinctly associated with the occurrence of the flood—though whether they came at the beginning of the disturbance, or simply occurred while the waters were out over the plains of China, does not clearly appear.

After the threatened but not accomplished destruction of the world in the year A.D. 1000, comets were for a while looked on with suspicion, an idea appearing to prevail that the torch which was to light the final conflagration would be a cometic one. For several centuries, however, no comet came near enough to the earth or sun to excite any serious terrors founded on observed astronomical relations. But the comet of 1680 really presented characteristics which suggested dangers even to men of science. It was a comet of remarkable appearance; its course seemed at first directed full upon the sun; and though in those days it was the erroneous idea that the comet might supply an undue amount of fuel to the central fire of the solar system, which chiefly occupied men's thoughts (even Newton sharing the idea), the danger from which the solar system then escaped was considered to be real and serious.

In the year 1773 a report got abroad—how engendered is not known—that Lalande, one of the ablest mathematicians of the day, had pre-

dicted the end of the world, as the result of a collision to take place between a comet and the earth. We say it is not known how the report got abroad. The circumstance which gave rise to the report, is, however, well known, though avowedly there was nothing in it to have suggested special anxiety. The difficulty is to connect the circumstance with the exaggerated terrors presently excited. It had been announced that Lalande would read before the Academy of Sciences a paper entitled "Reflections on those comets which can approach the earth." It would be difficult to inquire how the report of this came gradually to be changed into the definite news that in the year 1773—nay, the very day was named, on May 20, 1773—a comet would encounter and destroy the earth, did not recent experience show how a statement of one kind may be changed—through carelessness, not through wilful misrepresentation—into a statement of an entirely different kind, when (in its later form) it seems to indicate the approach of some great danger to the earth. Plantamour, lecturing in 1872 about comets and meteors, says that the comet of 1862 passed near the earth's orbit; that along its track are travelling millions and millions of meteoric bodies; and that when the earth crosses its track meteoric displays may be expected; adding that the next display of the kind may be expected on or about August 11 or 12. Presently the news is travelling about that on August 12, 1872, a comet will fall upon the earth and we shall all be destroyed. Who gave to Plantamour's true and innocent statement this false and mischievous form? No one can say; no one can point out where or how the true became merged into the misleading, the misleading into the incorrect, the incorrect into the utterly false. But the terrors excited were none the less real that no one could tell whence they came or how they were generated.

Once such fears have been excited, it seems useless to attempt to quiet them, at least among the hopelessly ignorant, who unfortunately are so numerous and so readily made the victims of idle terrors. Lalande published in the *Gazette de France* of May 7, 1773, the following advertisement, to quiet, as he hoped, the public mind: "M. Lalande had not time to read his memoir upon comets which may approach the earth and cause changes in her motions; but he would observe that it is impossible to assign the epochs of such events. The next comet whose return is expected is the one which should return in eighteen years; but it is not one of those which can hurt the earth." But this tolerably explicit statement had no effect. M. Lalande's study was crowded day after day with anxious inquirers. A number of pious people, of whom a contemporary journal made the very rude remark that "they were as ignorant as they were imbecile," begged the Archbishop of Paris to appoint a forty days' prayer to avert the threatened danger, which for some reason they agreed was to take the form of a mighty deluge. And he would have complied with their request only he was told by members of the Academy that he would bring ridicule upon himself and upon science if he did so.

It was at this time that Voltaire wrote his well-known "Letter on the pretended Comet." It ran thus :—

Grenoble, May 17, 1773.

Certain Parisians who are not philosophers, and who, if we are to believe them, will not have time to become such, have informed me that the end of the world approaches, and will occur without fail on the 20th of this present month of May. They expect that day a comet, which is to take our little globe from behind and reduce it to impalpable powder, according to a certain prediction of the Academy of Sciences which has not yet been made. Nothing is more likely than this event, for James Bernouilli, in his treatise upon the comet of 1680, predicted expressly that that famous comet would return with a terrible uproar on May 19, 1719; he assured us that its peruke indeed would signify nothing mischievous, but that its tail would be an infallible sign of the wrath of heaven. If James Bernouilli mistook, it is, after all, but a matter of fifty-four years and three days. Now, so small an error as this being regarded by all geometricians as of little moment in the immensity of ages, it is manifest that nothing can be more reasonable than to hope for the end of the world on the 20th of this present month of May 1773, or in some other year. If the thing should not come to pass, "omittance is no quittance" (*ce qui est différé, n'est pas perdu*). There is certainly no reason for laughing at M. Trissotin, triple idiot though he is (*tout Trissotin qu'il est*), when he says to Madame Philaminte (Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, act. iv. sc. 3):—

Nous l'avons en dormant, madame, échappé belle ;
Un monde près de nous a passé tout du long,
Est chu tout au travers de notre tourbillon ;
Et s'il eût en chemin rencontré notre terre,
Elle eût été brisée en morceaux comme verre.

"A comet coursing along its parabolic may come full tilt against our earth." But then, what will happen? Either that comet will have a force equal to that of our earth, or greater, or less. If equal, we shall do the comet as much harm as it will do us, action and reaction being equal; if greater, the comet will bear us away with it; if less, we shall bear away the comet. This great event may occur in a thousand ways, and no one can affirm that our earth and the other planets have not experienced more than one revolution through the mischance of encountering a comet on their path. The Parisians will not desert their city on the 20th inst.; they will sing songs, and the play of "The Comet and the World's End" will be performed at the Opéra Comique.

Singularly enough, something even more preposterous than what the great wit had thus suggested did actually occur on this occasion. The fears inspired by the predicted approach of the comet were so great that speculators took advantage of the terrors of the ignorant, and absolutely persuaded many that the priesthood had by special intercession obtained the privilege of dispensing a number of tickets for seats in Paradise; and these pretended tickets were sold at a very high rate. It would be interesting to inquire what idea was entertained by those who purchased these tickets as to the way in which they were to be used, to whom presented, at what time, and where.

The story to which I have just referred was quoted by a Parisian professor in 1832, when a similar scare prevailed in France. It had been announced that the comet of 1826 (Biela's) would return in 1832; and it had also been stated that the path of the comet intersected, or

very nearly intersected, the path of the earth. This was immediately interpreted to signify an approaching collision between the earth and the comet, though nothing of the kind was implied. These fears, said the worthy professor, may produce effects as mischievous as those produced by the cometic panic in 1773, unless the authority of the Academy apply a prompt remedy; and this salutary intervention is at this moment implored by many benevolent persons.

At the present time, the end of the world is threatened in more ways than one. The methods of destruction are incongruous; but that is a detail hardly worth considering. If Scylla does not destroy us, Charybdis is bound to do the work, and *vice versa*. There is no escape for us.

A few months ago, the prophecy of Mother Shipton was chiefly feared. But as the world certainly did not come to an end in 1881 (though Gerald Massey says Mother Shipton's prophecy—which she never made by the way—was really fulfilled) we must now look for the world's destruction in other ways.

And first we see it clearly indicated in the Great Pyramid. By slightly altering the dates accepted by historians, adding a few years in one place and taking off a few years in another, it can be proved to demonstration that the number of inches in the descending or entrance passages, as far as the place where the ascending begins, is equal to the number of years from the descent of man to the Exodus; and that the ascending passage contains as many inches as there are years from the Exodus to the beginning of the Christian era. (The rest of the descending passage, as far as the bottomless pit, or the pit with ruin-hidden bottom—it is the same thing—clearly represents the progress of the rest of the human race downwards.) This being so, of course it follows that the grand gallery represents the Christian era. This gallery has a length of 1882 inches, or, according to recent statements (not new measurements), 1881.59. Hence, in the year 1882, or more exactly at the time 1881.59, which corresponds to 1881 years + 7 months + $2\frac{1}{2}$ days, or to midnight between August 3rd* and 4th, the Christian era is to end. The reader is not to be alarmed, however, by this seemingly precise statement. As the time has drawn nearer, the pyramidalists have seen fit to add fifty years (more or less, according to circumstances) during which the end is to be finally brought about; August 3 will only mark the "beginning of the end." Still, it may fairly be presumed that something significant will happen about that time. Possibly some remarkable person, or person who is hereafter to be remarkable, will be born at midnight August 3; in which case it seems possible that the world might remain in ignorance of the fact for a year or two.

But next the planets take their turn. The terrible words "perihelion conjunctions" are heard with appalling effect. It is true they

* Astronomically the second day in August ends at noon August 3.

are entirely without meaning ; science knows nothing about perihelion conjunctions ; but that is nothing—any name is good enough to conjure by. Let us see what perihelion mischief is in store for us.

Jupiter was in perihelion on September 25, 1880 ! “The perihelia of other planets in 1881 occurred” (this is not a scientific mode of presenting the matter ; but that is not the fault of the prophets—they speak as correctly as they can) “as follows : Mercury, February 21 ; Venus, March 6 ; Mercury, May 20 ; Mars, May 26 ; Mercury, August 16 ; Venus, October 16 ; Mercury, November 12.” This was very dreadful ; though somehow the earth escaped that time. Imagine Mercury being four times in perihelion in one year ! We may perhaps find an explanation in the circumstance that he completes the circuit of his orbit more than four times a year, and must pass his perihelion each time ; but science tries to explain everything, and we must not be too precise in such matters. The year 1882, in which we are more interested, is even worse. Mercury has already been in perihelion, viz. on February 8 ; then we have March 25 (April 9!), Uranus ; May 7, Mercury ; August 3, Mercury ; October 29, Mercury again ; and absolutely on December 6 Venus transits the sun's disc ! Something will surely come of this, if we only live to see it.

But worse remains behind. “In August 1885, Saturn will be in perihelion !” “Neptune is in apparent perihelion” (whatever that may mean) “from 1876 to 1886, the height (?) being about $1881\frac{1}{2}$!” “Those skilled in astronomy inform us it is fully 6,000 years since the occurrence of a similarly powerful situation, although conjunctions and perihelia have occurred at more frequent intervals of time. To form an approximate opinion of what the earth is liable to experience at such periods, we must review the records of effects attending similar situations, remembering that with the ripening of our planet the effects upon the earth and its inhabitants will be more generally distributed.”

This being so, these perihelia occurring in so unusual a way, being also rendered very terrible by being called perihelion conjunctions, and the dependence of terrestrial disturbances on planetary motions being too obvious to be worth proving, we have only to consider what has happened during past floods, earthquakes, and so forth, to see exactly what is in store for us pretty soon. Science, which is always too particular in such matters, may perhaps show that whatever influences the outer and larger planets may produce on the earth (it is very doubtful whether they produce any except very slight deviations from her mean track) cannot be effectively greater when the planets are in perihelion than when they are in aphelion ; that terrestrial disturbances have nothing whatever to do with these relations ; and that as perihelion passages and planetary conjunctions are occurring every year, earthquakes and floods could not possibly occur in years when there were no such phenomena : but the prophets have nothing to say to all that ; they calmly go on to describe the various terrestrial disturbances which have occurred

regarding any attempt to show that there is the slightest real connection between the planetary movements and the earth's throes as quite unnecessary.

Here, however, is the summing up of the planetary prophecies by one of the most earnest, and therefore wildest, of the prophets. "In cases of planetary attraction, the earth's crust becomes attracted as a solid whole. Its fluid and aerial envelope responds when irregularly attracted, by oscillating in high and low tides, alternating with unequal pressure. We are approaching both stellar and planetary conditions which fortunately will require a certain number of years—say 1880 to 1885—for their complete unfoldment; hence their action may not be wholly manifest in a special month of any year; but this whole cycle of years is liable to be affected by a generally disturbed condition of the earth and its inhabitants."

But utter rubbish as all this is—the offspring of sheer ignorance and hysteric vapours—it is not much more absurd than the prediction recently based on the observed fact that the comet of 1880 travelled along the same path as that of 1843, this path lying very close indeed to the sun. Assuming, as is really not improbable, that the comet of 1843 passed so near to the sun as to have been retarded by the resistance of the corona, and so came back after a shorter circuit than it had before traversed, it is likely enough that the comet will next return after a yet shorter interval. Possibly Marth's period—"say seventeen years" he puts it—may be near the truth, in which case the comet would come back in 1897. The next return after that might be in seven or eight years, say in 1904. The next perhaps is three or four, and very likely by about the year 1920 or 1925 that comet may reach the end of its career, being finally absorbed by the sun. It is also very likely that if, instead of being thus gradually checked off, so to speak, this comet in its original full-sized condition, with many millions of millions of meteoric attendants, had rushed full tilt upon the sun, it might have done a deal of mischief. A very able astronomer, Professor Kirkwood, of Bloomington, Indiana, believes (and very likely he is right) that two of the larger meteoric attendants on this comet falling into the sun in September 1859, produced that remarkable solar disturbance which was accompanied by very remarkable magnetic disturbances and auroral displays all over the earth; so that doubtless the whole comet with its attendants pouring all at once upon the sun would have stirred him in a way which we should have found very noteworthy, even if we did not find it absolutely destructive to the earth and its inhabitants. But as a mere matter of fact (and so counting for something what end-of-the-world prophets may imagine) the comet of 1843 and 1880 does not travel full tilt upon the sun, and can never do so; its meteoric attendants are not all gathered in a single cluster, but form an immensely long train (if Kirkwood was right in the above-quoted surmise, those which fell into the sun in 1859 were at least sixteen years behind the main body); and it is clear that a

very effective interruption of the comet's career in 1843, repeated in 1880, can take place without in any appreciable degree affecting our comfort, still less our existence. If the comet of 1880 was the same object as the object of 1843, it showed very evident signs of having suffered grievously during its former perihelion passage. If it is proportionately reduced at its next return, we might even see it fall straight upon the sun (were that possible) without much fearing any evil consequences. Nothing which is known about comets in general, or about this comet in particular, suggests the slightest danger to the solar system, though everything suggests that the comet's career as an independent body will before very long come to an end. If the comet ever was a dangerous one, owing to the concentration of its meteoric components, it is not so now. If it really has been effectively checked in its career, it is evident such interruption can take place without harming us, and therefore the final throes of the comet need not trouble us in the least. If it has not been effectively interrupted, then the end is not nearer—in any appreciable degree—now than it was in 1843 or in 1686. In any case, the end of this comet's career, whether far off or near at hand, will in all probability take place in such a way that terrestrial astronomers will never know of the event.

R. A. P.

The Church by the Sea.

I.

THAT spirit of wit, whose quenchless ray
 To wakening England Holland lent,
 In whose frail wasted body lay
 The orient and the occident,

II.

Still wandering in the night of time,
 Nor yet conceiving dawn should be,
 A pilgrim with a gift of rhyme,
 Sought out Our Lady by the Sea.

III.

Along the desolate downs he rode,
 And pondered on God's mystic name,
 Till with his beads and votive ode,
 To Walsingham Erasmus came.

IV.

He found the famous chapel there,
 Unswept, unwindowed, undivine,
 And the bleak gusts of autumn air
 Blew sand across the holy shrine.

V.

Two tapers in a spicy mist
 Scarce lit the jewelled heaps of gold,
 As pilgrim after pilgrim kissed
 The relics that were bought and sold.

VI.

A greedy Canon still beguiled
 The wealthy at his wicket-gate,
 And o'er his shining tonsure smiled
 A Virgin doubly desecrate.

VII.

The pattered prayers, the incense swung,
The embroidered throne, the golden stall,
The precious gifts at random flung,—
And North Sea sand across it all!

VIII.

He mocked, that spirit of matchless wit;
He mourned the rite that warps and seres:
And seeing no hope of health in it,
He laughed lest he should break in tears.

IX.

And we, if still our reverend fanes
Lie open to the salt-sea deep,
If flying sand our choir profanes,
Shall we not laugh, shall we not weep?

X.

We toll the bell, we throng the aisle,
We pay a wealth in tithe and fee,
We wreath the shrine, and all the while
Our Church lies open to the sea.

XI.

The brackish wind that stirs the flame,
And fans the painted saints asleep,
From heaven above it never came,
But from the starless Eastern deep.

XII.

The storm is rising o'er the sea,
The long bleak windward line is grey,
And when it rises, how shall we
And our weak tapers fare that day?

XIII.

Perchance amid the roar and crack
Of starting beams we yet shall stand;
Perchance our idols shall not lack
Deep burial in the shifting sand.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.



SHE DREW OFF HER LONG GLOVES SLOWLY.

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Hamocles.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FOR PERCIVAL."

CHAPTER V.

ON THE CLIFF.

"Can I not say a word shall do you good?"



AUGUST by the sea. The words are enough to call up a picture of boats, bathing-machines, donkeys, children, mammas, nursemaids, seaweed, shells, wooden spades, and parasols, all gathered together on a strip of sand under a hot sky. The seaside place which Miss Whitney had chosen for a three weeks' stay had its share of most, if not all, of these, but a comparatively small share, being a quiet little village, not very widely known. As it could not be reached by rail, it

escaped the hordes of excursionists who are attracted from afar by the promise of a day at the seaside. A few came occasionally by boat from a fashionable town across the bay, but, as a rule, the lesser place was left to its regular visitors.

Rachel Conway had left the shore, followed an often-trodden upward path, and now sat near the edge of the cliff, gazing seaward. The dog's-eared, untidy novel, which lay on the grass beside her, might be supposed to represent amusement by any one who had never looked into it. Rachel rather suspected that its shabbiness was due less to study than to the resentful carelessness of would-be readers. (What power presides over the choice of books in seaside libraries? Blind chance must surely produce happier results.) Luckily the dulness of the story was of little importance in this case, as Miss Conway was dreamily

thoughtful. Beyond her and far away to the south lay the level sea, breaking in restless ripples through a dazzling network of sunlight. With half-closed eyes she watched the diamond flashes, varying at every glance, and yet eternally the same. Time after time she listened to the wave as it drew backward, and waited through the momentary pause for the soft recurring rush of water far below. Or, lifting her head, she gazed up into the blue at the swiftly-flying birds, or the shreds of cloud which changed and disappeared, leaving no trace to tell that they had ever been. Little gusts of wind came idly to her upturned face—little wandering breezes that seemed to faint in the hot air and die upon her cheek.

She was content that her thoughts should drift as idly as the clouds in the languor of the August afternoon. She had spent more than a fortnight by the sea, and she felt as if she had been steeped in sunshine and saltness, till she could half defy and half forget her melancholy. She would not endanger her lazy happiness by thinking, in any earnest meaning of the word. Besides, it was too late to think. She had a letter in her pocket, and Charley Eastwood was coming by the coach the next day. She hardly knew how or when she had made a momentous decision; but she knew that it was made, and felt it a relief that no room was left for further hesitation. It was true that the final word was yet to be spoken, but there was no doubt what that final word must be. Charley, when he proposed to come to the little seaside village for a couple of days, had so worded the suggestion that Miss Whitney understood the state of affairs in a moment. And when Rachel said, in a tone which was intended to convey a proper degree of unconsciousness, that it would be very nice if Mr. Eastwood would come and wake them up a little, Miss Whitney's invitation was written and re-written with the utmost care, and, after being submitted to Rachel for her approval, was posted with her own hands as a document of vast importance. The girl understood what it all meant, and smiled to herself. Of course she was going to say "Yes" to Charley, who had sent her a little note naming the train by which he would leave town, and more than hinting at the reason of his coming. It was not for one moment to be supposed that she would invite him to travel that distance, and tell her about his increase of salary, in order that she might have an opportunity of saying "No." Nor did she wish to say it. Charley was not perfect; but he was a dear, good fellow, frank, fearless, sweet-tempered, and he loved her. And perhaps Rachel found more romance in Charley's love-making than any one else could have done. It dated from the time when she was a shy, lonely schoolgirl, and the Eastwoods' house was her first glimpse of a real home since the day that her mother died. Charley was the pride and darling of that home, a long-limbed, smooth-faced, curly-haired youth, with more possibilities, if not more actual promise, of brightness and distinction than he ever attained. It would have been a kind of treason to the house which sheltered her, to have refused to

believe in the young hero; and she did believe in him, and was delighted with his homage. Effie's innocent wonder at the revelation of her brother in a new character touched Rachel with her first delicious consciousness of power, and with the certainty that there was some one in the world who cared for her lightest word. Charley's boyish love-making was mixed up with all manner of pleasant things—with the sweetness of that happy midsummer, with bright days, with long evenings under the trees, with sunlight and moonlight, and flowers. On the eve of her departure they stood together by the rose-covered trellis in the garden, looking at the last faint glow in the western sky. Some one called Effie, who was with them, and they found themselves alone in the warm twilight. Charley turned to his companion. "Shall you forget us?" he said. She shook her head, with one quick upward glance, and the boy put his arm about her waist, drew her to him, and kissed her with lips as smooth as her own. Rachel's heart beat fast; she did not speak, but she felt as if Charley and she stood together in the centre of the whole world, and she never forgot that moment. They parted thus for a couple of years, during which time she thought of him with simple fidelity, and when they met again his rekindled admiration did duty for the most exemplary constancy. He was not much altered. His good looks were somewhat more defined, his boyish bashfulness was almost gone, he felt himself vastly improved, and naturally supposed that the improvement was as evident to others as to himself. Rachel, however, regretted the slight change, though she regarded it as something inseparable from manhood. She imagined that she, too, had grown more practical, and she neither expected nor desired that they should take up their love-story precisely where they laid it down. To no one else could she ever give her love with the delicate bloom of a first fancy, a first kiss, upon it, and her self-respect bound her to him more strongly than a thousand spoken words. Since Charley was constant, she asked no more, but was content to wait, never doubting that the recollection of their parting was as present to his mind as to her own. As far as the main fact was concerned she was quite right. Charley perfectly remembered that he had kissed her in the garden, though it might be questioned whether he remembered that he had kissed her but once.

Thus Rachel continued to idealise her first love, with an instinctive delicacy which justified her fidelity while it preserved a likeness. Instead of picturing a splendid hero, and calling him Charles Eastwood, she frankly accepted her lover's deficiencies, yet touched them with such a tender hand that she could hardly have wished them away. The hardest matter to idealise would have been the easy style of flirtation which was Charley's way with girls; but of that she knew nothing. He did not merely conceal it, he forgot it in her presence. And, for her part, she had never doubted herself till she met Mr. Lauriston. During those three days she had been perplexed and uneasy, but when he went his disquieting influence seemed to go too. Three days failed to undo the

bonds that years had woven ; and Rachel, though swayed for a moment from her course, reverted to it on his departure, and thought of the temporary lapse as a kind of dream, unreal, yet leaving a peculiar impression on her mind. She would have fought against any temptation to be false, and she turned to Charley with something of renewed tenderness, because it seemed to her that, after a fashion, she had been false without any temptation to fight against. She was very certain that she was in no danger of caring for Mr. Lauriston. Her thoughts of him were poisoned by a faint aftertaste of distrust and repentance, but, while they were together, she was compelled by some strange sympathy to see Charley with his eyes. Since, however, she felt that anything that degraded Charley degraded her also, she liked Mr. Lauriston none the more for that.

But she was not thinking of Mr. Lauriston as she sat by the edge of the cliff, seeking her love-letter from time to time where it lay hidden in her pocket, and caressing it with dainty finger-tips while she looked out to sea. She had been curiously touched by the half-expressed tenderness, and the unwonted humility, with which Eastwood asked permission to plead his cause. As a rule, he found no particular difficulty in saying what he wanted to say. Such as they were, his ideas and words were very tolerably matched. But on this special occasion his clumsy attempt to express a feeling altogether beyond his ordinary range was laughable or pathetic according to the reader's mood. Rachel liked it better than if he had been more fluent. Words had so obviously failed him that the underlying sentiment was left to her generous imagination, and she found a manly sincerity in his very clumsiness. And if he were commonplace, did she not wish to be commonplace ? She looked forward to her future with Charley as to something far more honest and energetic than the aimless monotony of life as she knew it. She was grateful to Miss Whitney for much kindness, but she longed intensely for more liberty. Miss Whitney in the gentlest, meekest, most unanswerable way uttered oracles for the guidance of conduct. Having lived longer than Rachel, she knew what Everybody did, and she knew what Nobody did, so that she could speak with a kind of frightened authority on every question that arose. It would have mattered less if Rachel had not invariably found herself on Nobody's side. Nobody did what she wanted to do, and she was thwarted at every turn by Miss Whitney's fluttering anxiety. She never felt so free as when she was with the Eastwoods, and their warm kindliness contrasted pleasantly with the timid and well-regulated affection which was all that Miss Whitney had to bestow.

"This time to-morrow he will be here," Rachel was saying to herself, as she looked out to the far horizon. "What shall we do when he comes ? I must make the most of my two days. Suppose we have a boat in the evening ; there will be a moon, and the bay will be beautiful. And on Sunday afternoon we will go for a walk on the downs—a real, good, long walk—there can't be any harm in my going for a walk with

Charley on Sunday afternoon. I've half a mind to meet the coach to-morrow, but I doubt it wouldn't do; I'm afraid it wouldn't be proper for me to go all by myself, and claim a young man when the passengers were divided. Well, it doesn't matter; he will find us out fast enough. Last time I saw him was at the station, when I came away from Redlands." Miss Conway smiled to herself, recalling that day. Charley, Effie, and Fido went with her to the train. Fido joined the party entirely on his own responsibility, his presence not being discovered till it was too late to send him back. On reaching the station he became somewhat bewildered, pursued an imaginary path of safety across the track of the coming express, and then started off down the line in a determined search for Effie, who was calling him from the platform. He was captured at last, and Rachel from the carriage window saw him safe in Charley's arms, with Charley showing a face of flushed and smiling triumph over the struggling mass of white hair. He had not a hand to spare, so, as the train began to move, he stooped, with a smile, for Effie to lift his straw hat. She obeyed; but, absorbed in gazing after her friend, she absently replaced it very much on one side, and Rachel caught a last glimpse of him laughing and remonstrating, and tossing his curly head in a vain attempt to set it right. And now, recalling this, she looked up with a smile which suddenly died away. Perhaps it was partly because her thoughts were already turned to Redlands that she was reminded of Mr. Lauriston by a small, dark figure which was leisurely descending the opposite slope. She sat up and looked again, but the man had disappeared behind some palings and tamarisk bushes. "How stupid of me!" she said to herself. "I wish I hadn't thought of him just now, and yet he really was a little like." A shadow came over her face as she sat pulling dry little blades of grass, with her eyes fixed on the spot where she had seen the figure which startled her. She never thought of Mr. Lauriston willingly. There might be an unacknowledged comfort in the certainty that some one understood her trouble; but shame at her impulsive confidence was still hot within her soul, and Mr. Lauriston was for ever identified with that stinging memory. Had the confession been made to some old and trusted friend, there would have been pleasant associations as well as the painful one, and a better understanding of his feelings towards herself. But this stranger seemed to have entered into her life for no purpose but to possess himself of her secret. And kind as his manner might be, she said to herself uneasily that Mr. Lauriston could use words as he pleased, and play any part he chose. He was not like Charley. He understood, but perhaps he had laughed, or—she could not precisely say what she feared he might have done. She would have known if Charley had laughed, but she did not feel certain about Mr. Lauriston.

She was vexed that this chance resemblance should have disturbed the drowsy quiet of the afternoon, and she resolutely turned her eyes from the tamarisk bushes and stretched out her hand towards her novel.

But, even as she did so, she saw the man again. He had followed the footpath by the edge of the cliff, and was coming up from the hollow. Now that he was nearer the likeness was curiously strong, or—"It is Mr. Lauriston!" she said to herself with a shock of surprise. Her outstretched hand dropped loosely by her side, and she watched the slim, dark figure, advancing with no change of pace, till she felt as if she waited for it in a dream. It might have been that fear of hers climbing the hillside to return to her once more. Why did such idle fancies always come into her mind when she met Mr. Lauriston? She glanced over her shoulder, and wondered what strange chances might be silently travelling, by converging ways, to find her where she sat and waited for them all.

When she looked back Mr. Lauriston had left the footpath, and was coming towards her across the sunburnt turf. He was so close at hand that she could see the expression of his face. It is a trying thing to manage that expression of face when a friend is seen at a distance. Naturally you smile at the earliest moment, and almost unconsciously you emphasise the smile lest it should not be visible; you, as it were, telegraph your gladness at the prospect of meeting. But having got this broad smile, what are you to do with it? It is painful to maintain, and you feel that it is fast becoming fixed and ghastly. You are glad to see your friend—you are very glad; but you are not accustomed to wear a smile like that. And yet you must not let it go, lest it should look as if you had changed your mind, and were not particularly pleased after all. Mr. Lauriston passed through the ordeal very well, with a touch of amusement as well as pleasure about his eyes and mouth, but even he came forward a little hastily just at last. "And how are you, Miss Conway?" he said, as he held out his hand. "You didn't expect to see me, did you?"

"I began to expect you about five minutes ago," she answered.

"Ah! as long as that? I didn't find you out till I was halfway up the hill."

"Didn't you really? I was surprised when I saw you first, and I watched you; but you never seemed the least surprised, and you came so straight to me that I fancied you knew."

"Well, I did know that you were in the place. But I was surprised when I looked up and saw you just above me."

"You didn't show it, then."

"Well, no, perhaps not," said Mr. Lauriston, as he sat down on the grass. "For one thing, I don't think I quite know how to express my feelings in dumb show all that way off. A startled pause, and then a hasty rush—would that have been right? But it was uphill, you see. Besides, there are five small boys on the slope, and I think, if it can be helped, it is as well not to display strong emotion before five small boys."

Miss Conway laughed. "I should think you contrive to avoid it pretty successfully as a rule, don't you?"

"Yes, I suppose I do." He leaned on his elbow and looked round. "You have chosen a pleasant place to rest in," he said. "And I think the sea air has done you good, Miss Conway."

She drew off one of her long gloves slowly, looking at her wrist. "Is that a polite way of telling me that I am of a fine mahogany colour? But I know that already; I've nearly driven Miss Whitney to despair. I can't keep my gloves on, and I can't keep my parasol up."

Mr. Lauriston smiled. She was not burnt, but there was a tinge of richer colour in the face which had seemed a little too pale that day in Redlands Park. He tried to find an adjective to describe the happy change to himself, and "sun-warmed" came into his mind as he looked at her. Suddenly she blushed.

"Miss Whitney must be very observant," he said. "You are not quite a nut-brown maid at present."

"Then perhaps there is some hope for me, as we have nearly come to an end of our time here. We go home on Wednesday." She looked down as she spoke, and absently lifted the cover of the book by her side.

"Am I disturbing you?" Mr. Lauriston asked. "Are you impatient to finish the story?"

"The story!—what, this? Oh, no! It is horribly dull. I did try when I came up here first, but it is too stupid."

"And so you were thinking instead? Well, may I interrupt your daydream for a few minutes?"

"If you like," she answered a little confusedly. She had not wished him to come, and yet she hardly wished him to go. He had interrupted the daydream so effectually that she felt as if it would be impossible to return to it. She made no effort to do so; in fact, she instinctively felt that she must not think of Charley while Mr. Lauriston was there. After his question she expected him to speak again, but he did not, and there was a brief silence while he looked at the headlands right and left, at the lightly-flying birds, at the brazen glitter of the sea. She cast a quick glance at him, and once more she was struck with the easy grace of attitude which she had noticed that afternoon in Redlands Park. It was curious to Rachel that she could recall that afternoon so quietly. Ten minutes earlier the thought of Mr. Lauriston had been a disturbing shock, but now that he was actually by her side she did not feel so much ashamed of having told him her secret. It seemed almost as if he belonged to that hidden life of hers—that life which struck its roots deep down into strange thoughts and shadowy places. He had nothing to do with her happier, healthier everyday life. But which life was most truly hers? She could hardly have answered the question at that moment, and yet she was pledged. Charley was coming by the coach next day; it was too late—everything was too late. Why had he come to make her feel as if that which must be were nevertheless impossible? "And it isn't as if he meant to do it," she said to herself; "it is just the

way he speaks, and looks, and moves. And it isn't that I like him, only when he is here I like no one else. I wish I had never seen him, and yet——"

Mr. Lauriston looked round, but Miss Conway was apparently absorbed in uprooting some of the little closely-clinging weeds which were woven in the turf. He watched her for a moment, then took a knife from his pocket, opened it, and politely offered it to her. She took it with perfect composure, used it to dig up one peculiarly obstinate root, and returned it with a word of thanks. "You are fond of gardening?" he inquired.

"I suppose so. I've never had much opportunity of trying, but it must have been some kind of gardening instinct which made me pull up that unlucky weed. Did you come by the coach, Mr. Lauriston?" She was trying hard to keep the thought of Charley somewhere apart and safe, but only with moderate success.

"No; I took a fly."

"And are you going to stay here?"

"I hardly know. Not for any length of time."

Here she might have remarked, "Mr. Eastwood is coming to-morrow;" but though she felt that it must be said, sooner or later, she was afraid lest Mr. Lauriston should look up and she should be forced to remember what he thought of Charley. While she hesitated he spoke again.

"I was going to tell you how I happened to come here to-day. The fact is I feel as if I ought to apologise——"

"To apologise—why? Do you mean to me?"

"No, not to you. To fate, or fortune, or luck, or whatever you please to call it. I have sometimes said that it was ironical. Occasionally I miss what I want by a hair's-breadth, and that is the worst kind of failure; in fact, no other is really of any importance. But very often I get it, and then it turns out to be something quite different from what I had supposed, and I shouldn't have wanted it if I had known. Or else I lose it." He paused. "Miss Conway, I fancy I have said this to you already."

"I think you have, or something rather like it."

"Very likely. Well, for this once I apologise to luck. By the merest chance I have come in for a great pleasure; an hour earlier or an hour later, I might have missed it. There is no merit of mine in the matter; I have nothing whatever to do with it. But I am very glad."

Miss Conway was a little puzzled; but she looked at him and she thought that he *was* glad. His eyes were shining, and his quick smile came and went as he spoke. She had not fancied that Mr. Lauriston could look glad. Amused—yes; but gladness was more for some one like Charley Eastwood.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It concerns you. Ah! but let me guard against any possible chance that my pleasure may turn out a pain after all. Miss Conway, did you not tell me that you had no relations; that you lived with this Miss Whitney, and that she was only a friend?"

"Yes, I did say so," she answered, fixing her great eyes on his face. "I have no relations—why?"

He drew a long breath of relief. "I thought so," he said, "and yet I was half afraid. The truth is, there is death in my news—there is death in everything, isn't there?—but it is death so far away, and so natural, that it cannot pain you much."

"Who is dead?"

"Well, it is a relation, though it seems you didn't know of her. She was an aunt of your father's—a confirmed invalid, I understand—and she died abroad a few days ago."

"I didn't even know my father had an aunt."

"She had very bad health," Mr. Lauriston repeated. "They represented it as a kind of miracle that she should have lived so long. I don't think she had been in England for many years. But I can't tell you much about her—I really hardly know anything."

"But who was she?—you can tell me her name?"

"Oh, yes; Mrs. Elliott."

"Mrs. Elliott—no, I never heard of her. I don't think Miss Whitney knows, either. She was my great-aunt, then? Fancy having a great-aunt for one's only relation, and never hearing of her till now! It is very absurd, but somehow it makes me feel even more lonely than when I thought I had nobody."

"I think I can understand that," he said.

"But how did you hear anything about her, Mr. Lauriston? Who told you? And what is the news that pleases you?"

He answered with a question. "Do you know Mr. James Goodwin?"

"Why, yes. At least I know a Mr. James Goodwin. If I wanted to be very dignified, I should say he was my lawyer."

"Then you may always be dignified if you please, for you will want a lawyer. If I had known I was going to see you now—isn't it strange how fate seems determined that we shall meet?—I should have brought you a letter from him. As it is, the letter is in my portmanteau at the hotel, and my man has orders to find out your lodgings before I get back from my stroll. Will you be content for the present with an informal announcement that all Mrs. Elliott's money comes to you, or shall I go and fetch the letter at once?"

"No," said Rachel, putting out her hand as if to stop him; "don't go."

"May I congratulate you?"

She sat looking at him with a startled face. "Do you mean that I shall be rich?"

He smiled and bent his head. "You are surprised," he said. "You

didn't expect me to come and tell you this. But it is very simple. Goodwin is my lawyer, too; I called at his house last night to speak to him about some business, and as I was coming away he asked me if I knew the Eastwoods' address. I told him where Charles Eastwood was; and then it turned out that there was a romance in the matter—a young lady had come in for a fortune and her whereabouts was unknown, but Goodwin thought the Eastwoods might be able to tell him."

"Yes," said Rachel; "I was staying with them when I came of age, and Mrs. Eastwood went with me when I saw Mr. Goodwin."

"The Eastwoods and a young lady!—my curiosity was excited. I asked a question or two, and ascertained that you were the young lady. I had heard from Eastwood that you were staying here, and I was coming to this part of the world myself; so I explained that I knew you and would find you out, and deliver the letter to-day, which would be quicker than writing to ask your address, and then sending it by post. Simple enough, wasn't it?"

"Oh, yes, quite simple," Miss Conway repeated absently. Then suddenly waking up to a remembrance of manners, "And it was very good of you to take the trouble," she added.

"But that was the pleasure I told you of," he replied.

She smiled, at first in acknowledgment of his words, then vaguely, looking away and following her new and wondering thoughts. To her companion the sea, the western sunlight, the long line of the downs, the arch of sky, seemed all to take fresh meaning from that musing smile, and the brief pause was strangely bright and calm. She was the first to speak, and the smile deepened on her lips as she looked round. Whimsically enough, her talk with Effie, before she even saw Mr. Lauriston, had come back to her. "A little dark man, with bright eyes, and a pocketful of presents," she had called him then. And there he sat on the turf by her side, his bright glances ready to meet her eyes, as if he had just put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a fortune to give her. "I think I'm dreaming," she said softly, leaning slightly towards him as she spoke. "Mr. Lauriston, is it really true? Am I rich?"

"Yes, it's quite true."

"But tell me some more—make it seem real—what do you mean by rich?"

"I think you had better wait till you read Mr. Goodwin's letter. I wish I had brought it with me. When you are ready we will go back, and you shall have it."

"Not just this minute," she said. "I'm too much startled; I want to understand it if I can. But you might tell me a little." He was silent, still brightly looking at her, and after a moment she went on: "You don't mean something like that man everybody quotes, 'Passing rich on forty pounds a year,' do you? I don't call that rich; I've more than that already."

"No, no; I don't mean that."

"Well, then"—a sudden idea presenting itself—"am I as rich as you are, Mr. Lauriston?"

"No. Of course you haven't a big house to keep up; but still—no, not so rich as I am."

"You are afraid of saying anything lest I should be disappointed afterwards if you made a mistake? Something between you and the forty-pound man—that's a little vague, isn't it?"

Mr. Lauriston laughed. "I think I can safely say, if I understood Goodwin, that you won't have less than three or four thousand a year."

"Oh!" said Rachel, opening her eyes. "I didn't know you really meant as rich as that!"

"And what will you do with it?"

"I don't know. Perhaps I had better go and buy myself a new dress; Miss Whitney told me this morning I wasn't fit to be seen." She glanced smilingly at the linen gown of dusky blue, from which spray and sun and wind had taken any freshness it might once have possessed. Mr. Lauriston looked down, too, at the dark sleeve, and the warm white wrist and hand which rested idly on the turf.

"By all means get another gown," he said; "but can't it be just the same colour as this one?"

"Am I only to get one? Or are they all to be this colour? Do you like it so much?"

"Yes. You wore black, though, the first time I saw you."

"But I'm not going to spend all my money on dresses; I'll travel, and see all manner of beautiful places and things. And I'll tell you what I will do—I'll buy pictures. Fancy being able to *buy* a picture that one liked, instead of having just to stand and look at it, and go away. And I'll——" She stopped short, glanced at Mr. Lauriston with a startled expression in her eyes, and turned away her head.

"And—what?" he said softly, after a pause.

"Oh, nothing!" she replied, looking round and laughing. "Isn't it silly to make all these plans, when one doesn't really know what one will do? I dare say I shan't carry any of them out."

It was the thought of Charley that had startled her. For the moment she had actually forgotten him; he had slipped out of her mind as if he belonged to a past existence. Now she suddenly realised that everything was changed except Charley. He was the same as ever, he was coming to claim her, this new life would be his as inevitably as the old. And was Charley to travel about, see beautiful things, and buy pictures? She might well laugh as she looked round.

Had she not laughed, Mr. Lauriston would have thought that he understood her. As it was, he was puzzled, but he perceived that the conversation had somehow touched a dangerous point, and hastened to turn it with a harmless remark. "Well, I dare say you will find plenty to do with your money," he said. "At any rate, I'm glad you have it, and glad that I had the chance of bringing you the news."

"One would think you imagined that I was very anxious to be rich," said Rachel. "I suppose it is a good thing, but——"

"Don't say it isn't everything; I'm sure your friend, Miss Whitney, will take an early opportunity of telling you that. Of course it is a good thing, and of course you wish to be rich. Riches are a kind of royalty, and every woman would like to be a queen in her own right."

"There I don't agree with you, Mr. Lauriston. You may say what you please, but I'm quite sure we are not all of us so fond of ruling."

"Of ruling—no. A few want to rule, but the majority want to abdicate. That is a woman's idea of happiness."

Rachel kept her eyes fixed on the turf. "Oh, was that what you meant?" she said. "Well, I suppose we do like to give up better than you do. But why do you sneer at us for that? It sounded as if you were sneering."

"Heaven forbid!" said he. "Why should I sneer? By all means let woman sacrifice herself for man; it seems to me quite right and proper that she should do so. Unluckily," he added, slightly shrugging his shoulders, "she will insist on sacrificing herself for some other man, and he generally happens to be a fool."

Rachel laughed, as he intended she should laugh; but the shaft struck home. She knew pretty well what Mr. Lauriston thought of Charles Eastwood, and she thought she knew what he would think of her. Well, he must think what he liked. She threw back her head, and looked out to sea with a defiant face. Charley was a dear, good fellow, even if Mr. Lauriston thought him a fool. He loved her, and she loved him; he was brave and strong and true, a good son, a good brother, though he might not be able to talk fluently like this man. Why should Mr. Lauriston depreciate Charley? As it happened, Mr. Lauriston had not mentioned his name, but Miss Conway was too much vexed to consider this just then. And perhaps she was not far wrong; for while Mr. Lauriston sat on the grass by her side, he had thought of Eastwood, and said devoutly to himself, "Thank Heaven that the old lady wouldn't let her dear boy do anything rash. And blessings on the old uncle who had to be consulted—how mad they will be! Their hesitation has saved her. Eastwood can't very well rush off and propose to her the moment she comes into a fortune, and he would never have had a chance with her if it had not been for her ignorance and loneliness. Once let her understand what her new life will be, and she will be out of his reach for ever." He could hardly keep a smile from his lips at this triumphant conclusion. He knew nothing of that letter, which was only at arm's length, in the pocket of the blue linen gown, and, as he sat by Rachel, he could afford to wonder whether he could not contrive to do John Eastwood's son a good turn, and help him on in his business a little.

"It is time for me to go now, I think," said Miss Conway. She did

not intend that the angry perplexity of her feelings should find any expression in the tone of her voice, but Mr. Lauriston turned his head and looked at her.

"By all means," he said; and rose without another word.

The quick inquiry of his glance told her that her manner had been ungracious, and she was ashamed. For, after all, he had been good to her; that very day he had come out of his way to serve her; he did not know that she was going to marry Charley, and it would be absurd if she were to be indignant with everybody who—well, who was not so much in love with Charley as she was herself. She blushed; and, though she stood up, she hesitated for a moment before she moved. "I am so very much obliged to you," she began.

"What for? As I told you, it is simply luck. I had nothing to do with it. I'm just a fortunate messenger, nothing more."

Still she hesitated. "This is not the only time I have had to thank you."

It was her first allusion to their walk in Redlands Park. "Ah!" he said, as their eyes met, "that afternoon gave me the wish to help you, but it didn't give me the power."

She looked at him for a moment, then looked away. "I'm not so sure of that," she said in a low voice. "I think perhaps, without knowing it you have helped me—Oh! but I don't want to think of that just now, Mr. Lauriston!"

"No; why should you?" He put out his hand as he spoke, and took hers. "Remember only—but, no—forget it all. You will have plenty to think of in this new life of yours which begins to-day."

"Yes," she said simply, "I hope so. I had not been thinking, but seeing you again like this——"

Mr. Lauriston released her hand. "Forget it all," he repeated, looking far away at a white sail. Rachel's eyes followed his, and watched the vessel moving slowly on the sunlit sea.

"Must we be going, then?" he said at last.

"I suppose we must." Yet even then she lingered, and stooped to pick a late-blown scarlet poppy by the footpath. "I don't like going," she said, half laughing, yet in a disconsolate voice. "Everybody will have to be told, and there will be such a fuss."

"Is that such a heavy price to pay?" he asked with a smile.

"I don't like anybody to make a fuss about me," she replied. "And I don't want to make a fuss about anybody. Why can't people always understand?"

"Who is everybody in this case?" said Mr. Lauriston.

"Well, Miss Whitney. And she will make a dreadful fuss. Oh! you needn't laugh; you don't know what a fuss Miss Whitney can make. You should have heard her about my dress this morning, and even that will be doubly dreadful now."

"Oh, no, I think not," he replied, with a glance at her as she stood

in the western sunlight, tall and slender, pulling on one of her gloves, and smiling at him from under the brim of her broad hat. The over-blown poppy in her hand dropped all at once, and a couple of delicate red petals floated lightly down the dusky blue folds. "Mark my words," he continued, "you'll find that an old blue gown with all the starch out of it is universally admired, and quite the correct thing—if you'll go on wearing it."

"You admired it, I think, Mr. Lauriston?"

"Yes, I did. And I'll go on admiring it on that condition."

"I can't promise to fulfil my part of the bargain, I'm afraid, so you needn't mind about yours," said Miss Conway, as she threw away the remains of the poppy. Mr. Lauriston acknowledged his release from this obligation, with a slight bow and a slighter smile. Why did it occur to Rachel, at that moment, that she had never found an opportunity to remark, in a casual way, that Mr. Eastwood was coming by the coach the next day? She felt that it must be done before Mr. Lauriston met Miss Whitney; but she could not possibly say it just then, and she hastened to say something else. "Will your wonderful letter tell me everything, do you suppose? I can't make out how Mrs. Elliott had all this money."

"Perhaps her husband was rich," Mr. Lauriston suggested. "And she was the last survivor of a family of three or four. I fancy she inherited all the property, and one after the other, as the Rutherfords died——"

"What?" said Rachel.

He turned towards her. "As the ——" he began, and stopped short.

She looked straight into his eyes. "Oh!" she said in a low voice, "it's the madwoman's money!"

Lauriston stepped back. "No!" he cried, "it can't be! It isn't! You shall not say that!" He did not know what he was saying. He only felt that something awful had risen up between them as they stood, which must be crushed that moment.

"Yes, it is," she repeated, still in the same tone. "Miss Agatha Rutherford. That was her name—I didn't say so, but I knew. But I didn't know that my grandmother's name was Rutherford. Nor does Miss Whitney, but she never knew much about my father's people." As she spoke she was nervously unbuttoning the gloves she had just drawn on. There was no other sign of agitation in her manner.

Lauriston was pale as death. He understood now, and he was frightened at what he had said, and at her calmness. "It can't be!" he persisted, but he felt as if the words were choking him.

"I think I'll stop for a few minutes," said Rachel, turning back towards the edge of the cliff.

He followed her. "Sit down," he said, looking at her with anxious eyes.

"You startled me for a moment," she said, "but I don't think I am surprised really. Now it has come I feel as if I had expected it."

Mr. Lauriston watched her with something of fascination as she laid her gloves on the grass by her side, pulling them straight and arranging them carefully. It seemed to him as if the whole world of sky and glittering sea were an absolute blank, in which he could find no breath to draw, no single word to say to her. How much did she understand? "When I was sitting here only a little while ago," she went on, "and saw you coming up the hill, I wondered all at once what strange things might be coming from ever so far away, and climbing slowly up to find me here. Wasn't it curious? And this has been coming all these years."

"Don't talk like that," he entreated. "There may be some mistake; perhaps the name wasn't Rutherford."

She looked up at him with a faint smile, and the slightest possible movement of her head.

"Or there might have been some other Rutherfords. It isn't such a very uncommon name."

Again she made the little negative sign. "What's the use of trying to persuade me it isn't true when it is? I know all about it now. This Mrs. Elliott's name was Phœbe?"

"I don't know," he said.

"You'll find her name was Phœbe. I remember they said it was so sad that every one of them should be like that—a touch of it at any rate—except Phœbe, and people always thought she was the weakest of them all. Then my grandmother must have been—mad, my father's mother—ah, and my father too!"

With the last words came the break in her voice for which Lauriston had waited in terror. They were uttered in a sharp and sudden cry of pain, as if her heart had broken. He threw himself on his knees beside her, and caught her hands in his. "No, no, no!" he cried. "What do you mean? I never told you that!"

She looked at him with frightened entreaty in her eyes, as if she besought him to save her from the horrible dread which came nearer in successive strides. "My father too!" she repeated more than once. One would have said that her lips had learned the terrible lesson, and spoke without her will.

"Don't! don't!" he entreated.

Her eyes were still fixed upon his face, but all at once it seemed to him as if she did not see him. "Can't I die?" she said.

Lauriston was silent. Her hands were in his, and yet it seemed to him as if she were worlds away; he could not follow her, he could not help her, he had not a word to speak. And of what use would a thousand words have been? He knew, as no other man could know, the meaning of the tidings he had brought her, and he said to himself that it was enough to drive her mad. Yet what could he do? It was altogether beyond his reach; he could no more change it than he could change the colour of the sky overhead. That which had been, had been, and he was as helpless as Rachel herself in the grasp of that unalterable past.

The voices of the children playing and wrangling on the hillside came through the hot stillness of the afternoon. Some men in a boat shouted to those on shore, and pushed off with a measured beat of oars, and the commonplace sounds were unfamiliar and strange as if they belonged to another existence. Rachel drew one of her hands away, and listened, turning aside her head. "It's all just the same as when I came here," she said, "only the sun is a little lower. Oh! Mr. Lauriston, you didn't know what your news was!"

"No! Don't remind me of that! If I had known——"

"You couldn't have helped it. I must have known to-morrow."

"To-morrow; yes; but not to-day."

"A day doesn't matter much," she answered gently.

"Doesn't it? Who knows what may happen in a day?" He thought to himself, as he spoke, that Rachel might have died that night. It seemed to him that Death's random strokes must surely sometimes fall where Pity would strike. "Well, much or little, I have robbed you of a day," he said, "and I can't give it back to you."

"No; but it is best as it is. I'm glad you told me." He questioned her downcast face with a quick glance. "I can bear it better so. Perhaps if you hadn't come to-day Charley would have brought the news."

"Eastwood?"

"Yes; he is coming to-morrow. But he mustn't come; somebody must stop him; I couldn't bear it. I know you are sorry for me, Mr. Lauriston, but it isn't like Charley."

"No," he said in a low voice; "you are right; it isn't like Charley."

She turned and looked at him, but he was twisting the signet ring on his finger and did not meet her eyes. "I was going to marry him," she said, "you didn't know; but now that is all over. I shall never marry."

There was a long pause, and then Lauriston spoke in a slightly altered voice. "You must not think too much of this. After all, you are not changed." The words, as he uttered them, seemed weak to the point of silliness; but he had nothing better to say.

"Not think too much of this! What am I to think of, then? It isn't that I am changed, but I know now what it all meant. Mr. Lauriston, I thought you understood;" their glances met; "yes, and you do understand. I can never marry. I'm the last, and I'll be the last; no one who has this money after me shall hate it as I do. Oh! please go, and leave me by myself just for a minute."

He got up, and strolled slowly to and fro on the footpath. He turned his eyes steadily inland, and yet he seemed to see nothing but the girl at the cliff's edge, looking at her ruined life. The noise of the water softly lapping on the stones grew louder and louder in his ears, and the height of the cliff became terrible. A dim thought lay underneath the sight and sound, but he dared not suffer it to rise up. It seemed to him that if it were once distinctly realised it must fill the air, and reach Rachel Conway sooner than he could; but, while he was still contending with it,

he heard her call "Mr. Lauriston," and the unnamed dread passed away like a dream as he went towards her.

"I'm not going to be stupid any more," she said, looking up at him. "I was trying to be brave at first, but when I thought of my father it took me by surprise, and I don't quite know what I said."

Lauriston sat down on the turf. "What made you think it?" he asked.

"He was away for more than a year before he died, and I used to wonder where mamma went sometimes. I know now."

The girl's dreary certainty impressed her companion, and he made no answer.

"I wanted to be by myself for a few moments," said Rachel, "to try to get used to it. Now will you let me wait a little longer till I make sure that I can talk to you without being foolish—talk about anything or nothing, I mean?"

"We will stay exactly as long as you like," he replied. Then they were silent; Rachel looking along the line of coast, Mr. Lauriston staring absently at the dry grass.

"I haven't anything to say now," said the girl, with a faint smile.

"But I have." He continued to look down as he spoke. "Miss Conway, I think I understand what all this means to you. You said yourself you thought I understood. Well, suppose the worst—mind, I don't for a moment anticipate it—but suppose that your fears were realised——"

"Yes," said Rachel, looking intently at him. "Go on."

"I think you are afraid not only of—the thing itself, but of places and people connected with it, are you not?" He was painfully conscious of the clumsiness of his expressions, but he could not speak more explicitly. "When one pictures that kind of thing—as I suppose most of us have done some time or other—one imagines oneself put out of the way, not listened to, forgotten, out of sight, out of mind."

"Yes," said Rachel in a whisper.

"And I fancy, from what you said, that you feel that you have not many friends."

"There will be no one who will care for me," she answered, with something of defiance in her voice. "If *that* happened, Miss Whitney would be sorry for me—from a safe distance. There is nobody else now."

"Well, then," said Mr. Lauriston, "will you let me say that, failing any one else, I will do what I can? It may not be much, but I can promise at any rate that I will know what happens to you, and where you are, and that you shall not be forgotten. Not for a single day," he added in a lower voice. "What do you say? Is it a bargain?"

Rachel hesitated. "I don't see why you should take so much trouble about me, Mr. Lauriston."

"I don't think you will give me any trouble at all. And I'm an idle

man, you know. It is a bargain, then?" and he held out his hand with a keen glance at her.

Rachel put hers into it gratefully; yet, even as she did so, she felt as if Mr. Lauriston were in some way connected with her fear, and as if the shadowy half of her life grew nearer and more real at his touch.

"That is settled, then," he said, as she attempted some word of thanks; "don't let us talk any more about it." There was a pause. "Let us talk about anything, or nothing, as you said." He half smiled as he spoke, and Rachel looked round obediently to see if the wide world held anything that could by any possibility be talked about. The red sunlight from the west shone on her pale face, and touched it with colour. She put up her hand, and after a moment she moved a little to escape the level gleam, and, as she did so, her eyes fell on a dwarfed and stubborn shrub beside her. She broke off a bit. "Rest-harrow they call it; did you know?" she said, showing it to Mr. Lauriston, who was looking at her. "Isn't it a queer name?" She touched her lips absently with the dull pink blossoms. "Oh, I hate it! I hate it! How sickly it smells!" And she threw it from her with a passionate movement of disgust. It seemed to him as if she threw away more than the flower, and indeed Rachel felt as if all that life contained had grown sickly and horrible.

At that moment the children who had been playing on the hillside came trooping along the path, calling to one another in shrill boyish voices, and staring at the lady who sat on the grass with her white face turned towards them. She looked absently at the sturdy fresh-coloured little lads who tramped so unconsciously, in a commonplace little procession, through her world of shadowy terror. The foremost made a wonderful discovery of some insect creeping in the grass, and they all huddled together to look at it, and bandied questions, assertions, and contradictions, till with vehement stamping of a small hobnailed boot the investigation and the wonder came to an end together. Rachel's preoccupied gaze softened to something of interest and wistful kindness, as the little group broke up. "Look at them," she said. "I wish I were one of those boys. I think I should like to be that small one who lags behind."

Mr. Lauriston glanced at the little, white-headed, shortlegged urchin, and then at Miss Conway. "I think not," he said with a smile.

"Yes, I should. I should be just trotting home to my tea. Perhaps my mother would box my ears for being late. And after tea I should hardly be able to keep my eyes open; I should tumble into bed, and, oh, how I should sleep till the morning came again!"

Her companion shook his head. "I can't wish that," he said. "A thickheaded little urchin, with a hopeful prospect of developing into a rheumatic ploughman and pauper! No! a thousand times better be what you are and face your risk."

She looked at him; then rose with an unconscious grace which em

phased the immeasurable difference between herself and the little rustic she envied. "So be it," she said, "especially as I can't help myself."

"I suppose that's about as wise a speech as it is possible for man to make," said Lauriston, as they turned their faces eastward, and began to descend the slope. Rachel did not answer, and they went almost to the foot of it in silence, when she suddenly stopped and looked back. "Oh, the library book!" she exclaimed.

"I'll get it!" and he was gone in a moment.

She watched him as he hurried up the hill, and saw him stoop in the distance and pick up the volume from the turf, and she realised, as he did so, how dingy and dog's-eared and utterly unimportant it was. "I suppose I could buy up all the shop and hardly know it," she said to herself. She seemed to enter into possession of her wealth at that moment, and many things grew clearer to her. "It wasn't worth sending you back for," she said when Mr. Lauriston rejoined her.

"Why not?" he answered, turning the leaves as he walked. "Send me where you please."

"You are very kind, but you can't be always at my beck and call like that."

"Why not?" he said again.

"Of course you can't be." He made no reply; and presently she said in a low voice, "Mr. Lauriston, shall you remember what you promised me? If ever I *did* want you, it might be years hence, years and years——"

"And what if it were? I shall remember this day as long as I live. Why is it you cannot trust me?"

"Haven't I trusted you?" said Rachel, lifting her brows a little. "It seems to me as if I had!"

"Yes; you trust me for a moment, and then distrust your first impulse. The repentance has been at least as evident as the confidence. Oh, I'm not reproaching you; don't look at me like that! You can't help it, of course, but I should like to know where it is that I fail. Miss Conway, how can you possibly think that I shall forget?"

"I don't," she said, with her sad eyes fixed upon the sea. "But when I am alone I *shall* think so," she added with dreary foreknowledge.

"If I knew anything more binding than my word——" he began. "What can I do!—Stay!" He drew the black signet ring from his finger. "Will you take this?" he said. "Take it to be an assurance of my promise when you are alone, and think yourself forgotten." Rachel hesitated and drew back, glancing doubtfully at him. "What are you afraid of now?" he asked, with a slight despairing shrug of his shoulders.

"I am not afraid," she said; and in the act of holding out her hand she paused, drew off a thin little ring of chased gold, and offered it to

Mr. Lauriston. Her confidence had something proudly defiant about it, like a challenge. He took her gift silently, with an inclination of his head, and slipped the ring on a finger as slender as Rachel's own. She watched him, and her eyes filled suddenly with tears. "It was my mother's," she said; "it has her name inside."

"Then I make my promise to your mother," Mr. Lauriston answered.

This "giving and receiving of a ring" so far fulfilled his intention that it impressed Rachel's mind with a sense of the reality of their compact. Yet it turned her thoughts rather to the past than to the future. As she looked down and saw his signet ring upon her hand, she remembered Redlands. She seemed to see once more the great shadowy room, in which her companion leaned forward, with bright eyes fixed upon her face, and told her of the haunted walk. But, above all, the ring recalled that dim afternoon which they had spent together in Redlands Park. The low arch of sad-coloured sky, the misty distances, the rounded masses of foliage, the quaintly-ordered garden paths, came back to her remembrance like the landscape of a recurring dream. Again she felt as if she could hardly draw breath in the heavy atmosphere; and, in the effort to escape from the haunting impression, she thought of Bucksmill Hill, as she saw it the last evening of her earlier life, before she knew Mr. Lauriston. She recalled the white splendour of moonlight, the fresh breeze blowing over the height, the dusky purple moor stretching far away like a poet's land of rest and mysterious peace. And Charley was there—strong, fearless, honest, kindly, banishing all sickly fears by his mere presence. As she stood in the hollow between the hills, turning the black ring on her finger, as Mr. Lauriston had turned it on his only a few minutes earlier, she realised with a sudden heart-ache that she and Charley were parted for ever. She had said it before, she had repeated it to herself over and over again, but she had never understood the meaning of her words. She shivered in the consciousness of her loneliness, and turned to Mr. Lauriston with a desire to propitiate him, which was strangely unlike anything she had ever felt before. "Please take me home," she said, with a tremor in her voice. He offered her his arm, and she took it with an appealing glance at him. "You know," she said abruptly, "this is only the fourth time I have seen you." He hardly knew what he said in answer, but the expression of her eyes haunted him after they parted. It was like the look of a dumb animal in pain.
